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THE INFLUENCE OF THE SEA  
ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY  
OF JAPAN

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**The Influence of the Sea**  
**on**  
**The Political History of Japan**

**BY**

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GOLD MEDALLIST OF THE ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION**

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**1921**

YBAXALI OROTKATC

## PREFACE

THIS book is the outcome of suggestions made to me by friends, naval and otherwise, that I should employ the enforced leisure of half-pay in turning my attention to authorship; but in offering it for the perusal of those who are attracted by historical subjects I would ask them to be indulgent enough to remember that forty-five years of service in the Navy is not the best of training for literary effort. All I have endeavoured to accomplish, therefore, is to present a seaman's view of a subject of maritime interest which nobody has hitherto studied as a whole, and as I do not possess the advantage of being able to read the old Japanese records in the original, I have been dependent for my information in regard to the events in history upon the labours of those who do.

Many histories of Japan have appeared in English, but very different versions of ancient historical occurrences are to be found in the various accounts hitherto published, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain in an exhaustive search through the British Museum Library, no attempt has been made to sift the discrepancies and produce a standard record based on an acceptance of the points on which the majority of well-qualified writers are in agreement. Moreover, some writers, by specializing in the treatment of selected periods and passing lightly over others, have produced books which are lacking in proportion as a guide to the study of the whole matter, however valuable as works of reference for a part.

29. 11. 1911.

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**THE INFLUENCE OF THE SEA ON THE  
POLITICAL HISTORY OF JAPAN**



as one of the Great Powers—General summary of influence of sea on Japanese history—First a source of safety—Then a source of danger—Then again of safety—First period of isolation natural—Second artificial—Combined duration 1,500 years—Followed by period of probation lasting for fifty—Followed again by present period of power 1-12

## CHAPTER I

### THE PERIOD OF NATURAL SECLUSION TO THE END OF THE MONGOL INVASION

General description of natural features of Japanese Empire, and racial characteristics of Japanese people—Conditions of their life foster fighting qualities—Land supports population, but only with difficulty—Importance of ships for coastwise traffic—Very little foreign trade in early days—Proximity of Korea and strategic importance to Japan—Japanese expedition to Korea in second century—First foreign attack on Japan occurred in eleventh—Attackers were tribe of Manchurian pirates—Description of ships—Styles of fighting—Raiders defeated—Important effect of failure of raiders on other mainland States—Japanese left unmolested for 200 years thereafter—Birth of Mongol Empire—Serious menace to Japan—Ambitions of Kublai Khan to conquer Japan—Difficulty of getting there—Diplomatic advances rejected by Japanese—Kublai Khan prepares for war—Building fleet of 1,000 ships—Five years' preparation—First invasion in 1273 with 40,000 men—Invaders driven back to their ships—Fleet scattered by gale, with great losses—Kublai prepares second expedition on much larger scale—Fleet of 4,000 ships with 150,000 men—Six years' preparations—Defensive measures in Japan—Final diplomatic advance by Kublai—Rejected by Japanese—Invading army embarks—Great concentration of 4,500 vessels—Alarm in Japan—Landing of invaders—Desperate fighting—Complete destruction of Mongol fleet by violent typhoon—Terrible scene of destruction—Loss of 130,000 lives—Last attempt to invade Japan—Interval of 580 years before Japan again attacked—Remarkable circumstance that next attack came from Europe, 14,000 miles distant—Great development of naval architecture in that interval renders this possible - - - 13-41

# CONTENTS

x<sup>i</sup>

## CHAPTER II

### THE KOREAN WAR OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

	PAGES
Three centuries of external peace for Japan—Notable for arrival of first Europeans and change in China—Dictatorship of Shoguns established—Ambitions of Hideyoshi to conquer China—Preparation of fleet and army—Failure to obtain help of Portuguese ships—Prolonged diplomatic controversy with Korea—Request for Korean help rejected—Hideyoshi decides to invade Korea first—Army of 200,000 men sails for Korea—Arrives safely and carries out brilliantly successful advance—Korean fleet under remarkable admiral, Yi-sun—Styles of sea-fighting in the East in sixteenth century—Korean flagship specially designed to meet them— <i>Dreadnought</i> of her day—Yi-sun attacks Japanese fleet and wins three great battles—Suicide of Japanese admiral—Japanese communications cut—Capture of large convoy of ships with supplies for Japanese army—Yi-sun moves westward—Defeats another Japanese fleet conveying 100,000 reserve troops to Korea—Convoy destroyed—Japanese plans for invading China ruined by defeat on the sea—Victorious Japanese army in Korea reduced to starvation and forced to retreat to ports where it had landed—Temporary cessation of hostilities by Koreans and Chinese—Hideyoshi orders army to hold its positions on Korean coast while he gains time by prolonged diplomatic negotiations and builds new fleet—Koreans play into his hands by superseding Yi-sun through Court intrigue—But Korean and Chinese armies largely increased and reorganized—Hideyoshi fails to realize this—When ready he resumes hostilities with new army and fleet—Japanese victorious over new Korean admiral—Second invasion begins—Not successful in advancing far—Stubborn opposition of Korean and Chinese armies—Koreans reappoint Yi-sun to command fleet—Apprehension of Japanese in consequence—Death of Hideyoshi and consequent abandonment of campaign—Yi-sun attacks Japanese fleet conveying retiring army—Sixth and last great fleet action—Yi-sun killed in the fight—His character as Nelson of the East—One of the greatest leaders of men in history, with genius for strategy—Remarkable lessons of this war still applicable to oversea enterprises—No material gains to Japanese, but valuable experience, bearing fruit long after—Influence of the sea detrimental to Japan at this period of her history	42-72

## CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF VOLUNTARY SECLUSION TO THE OPENING  
OF THE TREATY PORTS AND THE ANTI-FOREIGN DIS-  
TURBANCES

PAGES

End of Korean War initiates long period of peace—Activity of Jesuit missionaries in Japan—Large numbers of Japanese Christian converts—Power of the priests—Their ambition to obtain political influence in Japan—Quarrels with Japanese—Alarm of Shogun at attitude of Christian converts—Edict of extermination of Christians and expulsion of all foreigners from Japan—Difficulty in carrying it out—Exception made in favour of Dutch under special restrictions—Beginning of period of 200 years of seclusion from the rest of the world—Japanese prohibited by own laws from leaving country—Other countries making rapid progress during this period in arts of peace and war—Great advance in science of shipbuilding and navigation—Precarious position of Japanese as weak island State—Trouble with United States over shipwrecked crews—Mission sent to Japan under Commodore Perry—Insistence on opening trade—Japanese afraid to refuse—First Treaty ports opened—Treaty with United States, followed by similar treaties with Great Britain, France, and Holland—Feeling against foreigners remains—Mikado averse to all treaties, but Shogun ignores him—Clans of Satsuma and Chosiu support Mikado—Outrages on foreigners—Prince of Chosiu fires on United States, Dutch, and French vessels in Straits of Shimonoseki—Ineffective minor reprisals by ships of war of those Powers—British Government orders fleet to Kagosima to demand punishment of murderers of British subjects and payment of indemnity by Satsuma clan—Confused condition of authority in Japan - - 73-94

## CHAPTER IV

## THE BATTLES OF KAGOSIMA AND SHIMONOSEKI

Arrival of British fleet under Kuper at Bay of Kagosima—Difficulty of pilotage—Rumoured nature of defences—Parleys with Satsuma officials—Delivery of British ultimatum—Delay in reply and ultimate failure of attempts made to negotiate—Active measures begun by seizure of three Satsuma ships—Batteries on shore fire on British ships—Battle of Kagosima—Complete defeat of Satsuma—Kuper returns to Yokohama—Marked effect of engagement

## CONTENTS

xiii

PAGES

on all Japan—Payment of indemnity to British authorities—Subsequent friendly attitude of Satsuma leaders—But Chosiu leaders remain hostile—Conference of foreign Ministers to decide measures against Chosiu—Ultimatum to Mikado—Chaotic internal condition of Japan—British, French, and Dutch squadrons sail in company to enforce disarmament of Chosiu batteries—Their demands rejected—Battle of Shimonoseki and destruction of defences—Submission of Chosiu prince—Conference to settle indemnity—Great effect on Japan—Complete reversal of attitude on the part of powerful clans—Confused political condition of country begins to improve—Foreign diplomats demand direct dealings with Mikado instead of Shogun—Mikado refuses further concessions—His death relieves situation—Young successor more enlightened—End of Shogunate decreed—Rebellion on part of last Shogun—His troops march on capital, but suffer defeat—His fleet sails for northern island of Yezo and proclaims independent republic—Temporarily successful, owing to weakness of Imperial forces on the sea—Ships purchased by Imperial Government—Expedition to retake Yezo—Engagements on land and sea and final defeat of rebels—Definite establishment of Mikado's power as actual ruler of Japan after lapse of 600 years—Great progress under new conditions—Founding of Imperial Navy . . . . .	95-124
---	--------

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CHINO-JAPANESE WAR

Importance to Japan of keeping Korea free from domination by any other Power increased by developments in science of naval architecture—Strategic position of Korea affects China as well as Japan—A constant source of friction between China and Japan for centuries—China claimed Korea as a tributary State over which she had special rights—Japan always refused to admit this—China averse to introduction of Western civilization into Korea—Japan in favour of it—Interests of both in Korea eventually settled by Convention of Tientsin in 1885—Oppressive government of Korean Court party causes rebellion in 1894—Chinese send troops to assist in quelling it—Japanese send troops also and suggest co-operation in reforming Korea—Chinese decline—Rebellion dies out—Japanese propose mutual withdrawal of troops—Chinese refuse this and prepare to send reinforcements by sea—Japanese send squadron to

Korean coast to prevent their arrival—Orders sent to Japanese troops in Korea to prepare to attack Chinese force already there—War imminent—General features of strategic situation—Advantages possessed by China—Comparison of rival fleets—First outbreak of hostilities—Japanese squadron attack and defeat Chinese cruisers conveying transports and sink British steamer with Chinese troops on board—Diplomatic aspects of the incident—First occasion in history of a troop transport being sunk by torpedo—War formally declared—Lack of enterprise of Chinese fleet—Despatch of Chinese troops to Korea by land—Great invading expedition prepared in Japan—Japanese land victory at Peng-yang—Chinese fleet escorts store transports to Yalu River—Discovered there by Japanese fleet—Battle of Yalu and defeat of Chinese—Escape of remnant to Port Arthur—Comments on the tactics of both fleets and general results of the battle—Attention of other countries aroused by Japanese victories—Remarkable effect on public estimation of the Navy in Japan	125-153
---	---------

## CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CHINO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE  
FIRST ALLIANCE WITH GREAT BRITAIN

General remarks on strategic positions after Battles of Yalu and Peng-yang—Necessity for Japan to capture Chinese naval base to render Japanese maritime predominance permanent—Strategic importance of Port Arthur—Plans for its seizure—Expedition starts, escorted by Japanese fleet—Lands without opposition on Liao-Tung Peninsula in rear of Port Arthur—Japanese fail to watch fortress from seaward—Chinese fleet escapes to Wei-hai-wei—Covering Japanese armies invade Manchuria from Korea—Advance on Port Arthur—Capture of fortress by land assault—Disappointment of Japanese at escape of hostile fleet—Necessity of capturing Wei-hai-Wei to destroy fleet—Further expedition required in consequence—Description of Wei-hai-wei from defensive standpoint—Estimate of its general strategic value—Plans for its capture—Expedition lands in Yung-ching Bay—Severity of weather—General scheme of attack—Advance on first group of forts from rear—Capture of all land defences—Destruction of many Chinese ships by torpedoes in succession of night attacks by Japanese flotillas—Desperate situation of remnant—Final surrender—Suicide of Chinese admiral—Estimate of his

## CONTENTS

XV

PAGES

character—Japanese maritime supremacy over China thoroughly secured—All Japanese objects in entering war obtained—Peace arranged—Terms of Treaty of Shimonoseki between Japan and China—Marked moral effect in Europe—Intervention of Russia, France, and Germany to prevent Japan retaining Port Arthur—Anger in Japan—Great diplomatic blunder of Germany—Events and considerations leading up to treaty of alliance with Great Britain—Great instrument for securing peace in Far East—Supreme influence of the sea on situation thus created—Treaty based on maritime power—First convention of its kind between a European and an Asiatic State—Also first between two island empires . . .	154-184
--	---------

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME WAR

General remarks on origin of Russian Empire in Asia—Want of an ice-free port anywhere in Russian territory a permanent source of political unrest in the East—Russian acquisition of Port Arthur in 1898—Strategic situation thereby created—Boxer outbreak in China affords Russia a pretext for the occupation of Manchuria—Protests by other Powers—Japanese interests in Korea and neighbourhood especially affected—Japan proposes settlement by a compromise—Russia refuses—Strategic features of the Russo-Japanese controversy—Grave difficulties of Japan—Advantages of Russian position—Only one advantage possessed by Japan—Special peculiarities of general situation—Comparison of fleets—Faulty disposition of Russians—War becomes inevitable—Japanese break off diplomatic relations and attack Russian ships outside Port Arthur—Russians retire into harbour—Mobilization of armies—Difficult situation arises for Japan—Doubts as to next move—Bold decision to send large army to Manchuria, although Russian fleet not definitely defeated—Policy of blocking them adopted—Repeated but unsuccessful attempts to effect it—Sea bombardments ineffective—Growing seriousness of the situation for Japan—News received of preparations for the despatch of large fleet from the Baltic—Mining operations begun—Blowing up of Russian flagship with Commander-in-Chief—Serious damage to another Russian battleship—Heavy loss to Russia—Failure of third and last Japanese attempt to block up Port Arthur—General appreciation of strategic position at end of first three months of war—Japanese prospects rather improved temporarily . . .	185-215
--	---------

## CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME  
WAR

PAGES

Remarks on special features of three different kinds of overseas wars—Particular interest of Russo-Japanese War on account of close interdependence of operations on land and water—Japanese general plan for invasion of Manchuria—Great modifications necessitated by maritime situation—Imperative necessity of capturing Port Arthur and fleet inside—Element of time very important in view of Russian naval preparations in Europe—Large diversion of force from Manchuria necessitated—Apprehension in Japan—Despatch and disembarkation of Port Arthur attacking army on Liao-Tung Peninsula—Difficulty of finding good landing-point—Danger to transports from Russian destroyers—Alarm at St. Petersburg on receipt of news—Urgent orders to Russian forces—Strenuous efforts to press on preparations in Baltic—Redoubled efforts of Japanese—Blowing up of two Japanese battleships—Gravest misfortune of war to Japan—Serious condition of affairs from Japanese standpoint—Battle of Nanshan and retreat of Russians—Japanese capture Talien-Wan Bay—General movements in Manchuria—Defeat of Russian relieving army—All hopes of saving Port Arthur thereby ended—Russian fleet ordered out to attack Japanese—Leaves harbour accordingly—Japanese fleet proceeds to meet them—Russian admiral evades action and returns to Port Arthur—Russian council of war advises against further attempts to break out—Japanese closing in on fortress—Final investment—Peremptory orders to Russian fleet from Tsar to break out and make for Vladivostok—Japanese fleet ready—Great sortie of Russian fleet on August 10—Battle of Yellow Sea—Remarkable incident turns the day in Japanese favour—Night retreat of Russian fleet in disorder—Decisive importance of battle—Improvement in Japanese prospects—Raids of Vladivostok cruisers—Difficulty of locating—Sinking of Japanese transports—Public irritation in Japan—Cruiser battle of Ulsan—Another Russian defeat—Opinion changing in Europe as to certainty of Japanese defeat in the war	216-250
---	---------

## CONTENTS

xvii

### CHAPTER IX

#### THE FINAL PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME WAR

	PAGES
Effect of Battle of Yellow Sea on plans of both belligerents— Russian fleet from Baltic starts—Anxiety in Japan— Japanese general assaults on Port Arthur fail with heavy losses—Urgent need of refit of Japanese ships—Japanese change their tactics and devote efforts to obtaining some point giving view of interior of harbour—Capture of 203 Metre Hill gives excellent observing position—Fate of Russian ships in harbour sealed in consequence—Sunk by bombardment of heavy siege batteries—One Russian battleship leaves harbour—Long series of torpedo attacks on her, lasting seven nights—Terrible weather conditions for attacking destroyers—Heroic defence—Sunk by her own crew under superior orders—Russian lines of defence broken through by land mines—Weakening power of defence—Final surrender—Heavy losses on both sides in siege—Outward voyage of Baltic fleet—Remarkable feat of organisation—Violation of neutral coaling ports—Final stage of voyage—Interest in Europe—Acute tension in Japan—Strategic problem of interception—Dispositions of Togo—Comparison of lines of battle in two fleets— Tactical conditions of coming fight—Russian fleet sighted at dawn by Japanese scouts—Dramatic situation—Battle fleets encounter—Opening phase of general action off Tsushima—Description of engagement—Appalling Russian losses—Devotion of Russian crews—Fighting continued all night—More Russians sunk—Last remnant intercepted in flight to Vladivostok—Forced to surrender—Complete annihilation of Russian fleet—Capture of wounded Russian admiral—Unique historical features of this great battle— Depression in Russia—Hopeless deadlock in land operations —Termination of war by Peace Conference in United States —Peculiar interest of special features in this remarkable maritime struggle—Different from all others in history in many important points—First use of mine and torpedo on large scale . . . . .	251-287

### CONCLUSION

Results of war establish Japanese position as first-class Power  
—Unexpected by foreign diplomats—General modification  
of foreign policy towards Japan in consequence, except  
in Great Britain—Anglo-Japanese alliance revised and  
brought up to date—Benefits secured thereby to both con-



tracting parties—The greatest instrument for maintaining peace in the Far East—Scramble for China stopped—Conditions in Korea compelled Japan to intervene after fifteen years' abstention—Position of Japan towards Korea similar to that of Great Britain towards Egypt in 1882 or United States towards Cuba in 1898—Annexation only alternative to permanent anarchy—Immediate improvement—Action criticized in irresponsible quarters, but recognized by other Governments as unavoidable—Alliance with Great Britain revised for the second time in 1911—End of comments on influence of sea on political history of Japan from standpoint of the past—Remarks on outlook for the future—Strong defensive position of Japan at the present time—Difficulty of attacking her without first-class naval base in Eastern waters—No Power owns such a base—Japan's policy too shrewd to be aggressive towards States of Europe or America—But will defend her interests in Far East tenaciously—War with any Power unlikely for three reasons—School of alarmists anticipate war with United States—Such a view based on ignorance and repudiated by Roosevelt—No cause of trouble exists that cannot be settled by mutual forbearance—Japanese grievance against emigration to United States not justified—Founded on lack of historical knowledge—Racial differences cannot be abolished by League of Nations—Fundamental differences between peoples of European and Asiatic stock—Cannot inhabit same country on terms of equality in peace—Same applies to Japanese emigration to Australia—But if Japanese are shut out from all other continents their interests in their own quarter of the world must be recognized in common justice—Japanese are a civilized and progressive race and entitled to recognition as such—Will defend their local interests with determination if threatened by commercial greed of other countries—Strong advantages for defensive war against attempts at aggression in eastern area of Asia—These considerations render war improbable, but moderation and restraint must be exercised by world's leading Powers in dealing with Far Eastern situation—Japanese battleship policy—Probably better served by submarines—Tribute to Japanese seamen by Russian admiral—Pacific Ocean may earn its name in a double sense if reason prevails in politics—But if not it will witness one of the worst racial conflicts in the history of the world	288-296
--	---------

## LIST OF PLANS AND DIAGRAMS

FIG.	PAGE
1. HAKOZAKI BAY (MODERN FUKUOKA)     -     -     -	26
2. STRAITS OF SHIMONOSEKI AND APPROACHES     -     -	87
3. GULF OF KAGOSIMA     -     -     -     -     -	96
4. DIAGRAM SHOWING OPENING MOVEMENTS AT BATTLE OF YALU     -     -     -     -     -	148
5. PORT ARTHUR PENINSULA AND NEIGHBOURING COAST- LINE     -     -     -     -     -	155
6. WEI-HAI-WEI HARBOUR AND NEIGHBOURING COAST TO YUNG CHING BAY     -     -     -     -     -	163
7. DIAGRAM SHOWING FIRST AND LAST POSITIONS OF ARMOURED DIVISIONS AT BATTLE OF YELLOW SEA	242
8. DIAGRAM SHOWING ORGANIZATION OF JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN ARMOURED SQUADRONS     -     -     -	271
9. DIAGRAM SHOWING APPROACH TACTICS OF JAPANESE ARMOURED DIVISIONS AT BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA     -	274
GENERAL MAP     -     -     -     -     -	<i>At end</i>

1

2

3

# THE INFLUENCE OF THE SEA ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF JAPAN

## INTRODUCTORY

ON the 28th of June, 1914, a political murder committed in the streets of a small European town, from which Japan lies many thousand miles distant, set alight a train of consequences profoundly affecting all the principal Powers of the world, and not least the Empire of the Rising Sun, far though it stands from the scene of the crime. Before this event, and the all but universal war to which it gave rise, Japan, with her fifty-five million inhabitants, ranked fifth in population among the States ruled under highly progressive social conditions, coming after Russia, the United States, Germany, and the British Empire, exclusive in each case of coloured subjects. But the war broke up the unity of Russia and, by the terms of peace, imposed stringent limitations upon the scale of armed forces that Germany was allowed to maintain. As a result the Japanese people now stand third in point of numbers, instead of fifth, among the nations at liberty to maintain armed forces on any scale they please.

Moreover, at the end of the war Japan was not only the third in population and the potential strength which that implies, but third strongest at sea. The fleet of Germany had disappeared, while that of Russia had ceased to be an effective force, and that of France had dropped out of competition as a result of financial stress. Only three naval Powers of any serious consequence really remained—that is to say, Great Britain, the United

States, and Japan. And yet, again, the war left Japan in a condition of relative freedom from debt as compared with the other belligerents, which was almost tantamount to a doubling of the national capacity to spend. If not actually a wealthy State by the standards of the West, she remained at least free to devote such money as she could raise almost entirely to purposes of defence, whereas all the others are now compelled to set aside a large portion of their national revenues towards the meeting of obligations which do nothing to strengthen their positions.

In regard to all the material requirements for waging war, therefore, the course of events from 1914 to 1918 elevated the Japanese to the third place among the peoples of the world for the time at least; and whether the twentieth century is hereafter to bring war or peace, a nation in that very prominent position cannot but exercise a strong influence on the development of human affairs. A still further factor in the prospective importance of Japan is the constantly increasing trade of the Pacific Ocean, wherein she must inevitably play a large part. All present indications, indeed, seem to suggest that we have arrived at a period in which the characteristics of the Japanese people, as indicated in their national records, are deserving of more study among other countries than they have as yet received. In no European centre of learning does Japanese history form any part of the regular system of higher education, but the statesmen of the future must assuredly expect to reckon with Japan in all questions of wide international bearing, for although only fifty years have elapsed since the Japanese held no place in the politics of the greater Powers, and might be attacked with impunity by any European State, their representative stands to-day as an important figure at all international conferences, and no nation whatever would embark on a conflict with the forces under their flag except as a very serious measure.

This rise to a front-rank place from a position of obscurity within two generations is generally recognized,

no doubt, as being without precedent in history, and to some superficial observers seems to suggest that a whole people have been unaccountably endowed with new attributes in that extraordinarily brief period. But the characteristics of an entire nation cannot undergo a complete transformation within a term of years no longer than the lifetime of a single individual—especially a nation of unmixed blood for twenty centuries; and the real truth is that Japan has been potentially a Great Power from a date antecedent to the political creation of most of the States comprising modern Europe. Her strength remained in abeyance, but it was there nevertheless, and the reasons for her long-continued obscurity stand plainly revealed in her history. From very early times the Japanese population has equalled or surpassed in numbers that of the great majority of the contemporary European Powers, and their aptitude for war has always proved second to none on every occasion of encountering a foreign enemy, even when at great disadvantages in equipment. Impartial evidence from various sources makes it clear that the Japanese warrior of the Middle Ages had no superior as an all-round man-at-arms with the weapons of the period, comparing well as an archer with the English bowmen of Crécy, and as a swordsman proving himself more than a match for any opponent ever met, not even excepting the elsewhere invincible troopers of the Mongol conquerors. Xavier, the Jesuit missionary, warned his countrymen adventuring to the Far East that the Japanese blade should be regarded with respect, and the Chinese and Koreans who felt its strokes had a saying that its lightning play was so rapid that it hid the wielder from view behind a whirling circle of steel. On the only occasion in history in which a British vessel with a picked fighting crew ever engaged a Japanese ship similarly armed—both being free-lances of the sea—the action ended in a draw, after a most bloody and prolonged struggle, in which the English captain was killed and his men compelled to resort to the desperate expedient of raking their own decks with their own guns before the

Japanese boarding-party were exterminated. Neither side gave any quarter; but although both vessels were ready enough to attack all and sundry on the high seas except the ships of their own country, each refrained thereafter from interfering with the ships of the other. From old records it is also evident that the devotion of the *Samurai* was equal to his skill. The idea of surrender was foreign to all his notions of war; and if for any reason defeat was inevitable, he usually died by his own hand rather than survive the death of his feudal leader, although not until he had left his mark on the enemy. Japanese annals have their parallels to the story of Thermopylæ—as, for instance, the frequent defence of Tsushima to the last man; but these heroic contests were regarded by the *Samurai* of the day as nothing more remarkable than proper displays of the spirit in which the profession of arms should be followed.

Yet in spite of a pre-eminently martial temperament, and a numerical strength from which large armies could have been raised, the Japanese remained a negligible factor in the political rivalries of the nations until our own times, mainly as the result of occupying an insular position, of which the effect on Japanese history is traceable in one direction or another throughout its course. In the early Middle Ages, when the science of shipbuilding was still at a very primitive stage amongst Asiatics, the difficulties attendant on the sea transport of armies rendered Japan secure against invasion on a nationally dangerous scale, and even Kublai Khan failed in the attempt, with all the maritime resources of the East at his disposal. But, conversely, it prevented the Japanese from threatening their neighbours, and for the first ten centuries of their authentic history kept them in the position of a Power of no importance beyond their own islands.

It may seem strange that they should have acquired and maintained so great a skill in the weapons of war in those early days, if they so seldom met a foreign adversary, but the reason is not far to seek. They did it by incessant fighting among themselves. In some nations security

against foreign invasion has led to a complete decay of martial spirit, but in others it has engendered civil war as the only outlet to an irrepressible military temperament, and there never existed a people of whom this was more true than the Japanese. For more than a thousand years their domestic records were one tedious tale of internal quarrelling and bloodshed. Every great noble kept his own force of armed retainers, using them to serve his own interests; and the Emperors, although venerated for their sacred descent, and nominally the sole sources of all authority, were reduced to the position of ciphers by usurping leaders of powerful clans, who attained, in turn, to a position of dictatorship by success in civil war. These self-constituted autocrats ruled the land for just as long as their following was strong enough to keep other rivals out of power. Sometimes they maintained their ascendancy by a purely personal hold, and were succeeded by an opponent at their death; and sometimes a clan was sufficiently formidable to retain its leaders at the head of national government for several successive generations. But the position of dictator, or Shogun, was always won by the sword and held by the sword, at a total cost of many thousands of lives, for the six hundred years during which the system lasted. And living thus in a state of constant war within their own territories, the Japanese developed a military caste who lived for nothing else, and reached a high state of efficiency in the use of their weapons; which served the nation well, on the comparatively few occasions in their history on which they met a foreign enemy.

There was, of course, another side to this. External dangers tend to keep a people united, and if Japan had been a mainland country, open to the invasion of alien armies, it is most improbable that all this fratricidal fighting would ever have taken place. Japanese swords would then have found a proper use in mutual support for national defence, and under such conditions their wielders might perhaps, at certain periods of Asiatic history, have fought their way to a very prominent place in Asia, for,



had they been willing to face such losses in marching against external foes as they suffered in massacring each other, their forces would have gone far before their career was stayed. On the other hand, however, it is practically certain that during the era of the Mongol conquerors they must have gone down before the enormous armies which subjugated all continental Asia and were only kept by the sea from overrunning Japan.

The effect of the sea on their early history, therefore, although not without its drawbacks, was, in the main, beneficial. It imposed a certain degree of isolation, but at that period isolation was not attended by the grave drawbacks which it involved at a later age, and it conferred a degree of safety greater than that obtainable in any other way. Gradually, however, these conditions underwent a change, and before the end of the sixteenth century the art of the shipbuilders had progressed, even in the remote East, to a stage whereby the natural difficulties of sea transport had so far been reduced that military expeditions across the water were practicable on a large scale up to moderate distances. From this development armed conflict on the sea itself arose, a branch of warfare known for ages in the West, but new as a science in the Far East, and not properly understood for a long time in Japan. Consequently, on the first occasion on which the Japanese found themselves engaged in a war abroad they ended in failure, because they did not appreciate that war may be waged on the water with decisive effect, whereas their enemies did. Incidentally, it may perhaps here be observed that the six years' struggle with Korea in the sixteenth century, backed by China, which taught the Japanese that lesson, furnishes some of the most instructive pages in all history on the main principles which should govern combined naval and military operations.

The Korean war of the sixteenth century, although ending unsuccessfully for Japan, had demonstrated to her rulers that if they chose to embark on a policy of foreign conquest the sea was no longer a barrier, provided

that they began such enterprises by defeating the enemy on the sea itself before proceeding to other measures, or at least by taking precautions to ensure that the enemy could do them no harm on the water. But not very long after that war had ended the Japanese dictator in power came to the erroneous decision—for reasons set forth hereafter—that the best interests of his country were served, not only by keeping out of foreign wars altogether, but by avoiding intercourse of any kind with the external world, although up till then foreign traders had been welcomed and foreign missionaries of religion tolerated. And so, early in the seventeenth century, he expelled every foreigner from the land except a handful of Dutch, put a stop to the building of sea-going ships, and prohibited his own subjects from leaving their native shores on pain of death. By shutting out all communication with the rest of the world in this uncompromising fashion, the Japanese arrested their own progress completely, at a period when Europe was making great strides in the arts of war and peace, and when they themselves had but recently acquired extensive experience in the proper conduct of overseas expeditions. Hence arose a state of almost complete stagnation, in which the real power of Japan remained dormant and unsuspected for two whole centuries, while that of less ancient States was taking shape.

During this period the Japanese remained profoundly ignorant of what was passing in other countries, and living, as they did, in a land which supplied all the necessities of existence, were content to remain isolated, in the belief that they had nothing to gain by foreign intercourse. Satisfied that their social and material progress left nothing to be desired, and failing to realize that, in the absence of the stimulating effect of foreign example and competition, they were standing still, they accepted without question the hermit-like policy established by their dictators. But no such policy could have been either initiated or maintained except in an island whose inhabitants were debarred by law from taking to the water, or perhaps in a country such as Tibet, whose natural

frontiers are very difficult to cross. Herein, therefore the influence of their sea surroundings was very detrimental to their true interests and helped towards a condition of arrested development attended with danger. Meanwhile the science of naval architecture was advancing steadily in the West, and with the introduction of steam propulsion it reached a point in which the sea was transformed from a natural barrier to military movements into an area across which force could be exercised on the largest scale with less difficulty in overcoming natural obstacles than in most areas on land. Such a revolution could not leave any island indefinitely untouched, and, although its earlier effects were not immediately felt in Japan, the beginning of an enforced participation in the general affairs of the world eventually came in 1853, with the historic arrival of a United States squadron in Yokohama Bay, bearing instructions to insist upon opening communications with the Japanese Government, which were backed by armaments 200 years in advance of anything that Japan could oppose to them. A still more impressive demonstration of the impossibility of remaining permanently aloof from other peoples came a few years later, when two Japanese ports were bombarded with devastating effect as a warning not to murder and insult Europeans with whom they came into contact. Their condition now could not be more aptly illustrated than by quoting a metaphor ascribed to one of their own public men, who likened the position of Japan to that of an oyster which has closed its shell for safety, but for that very reason fails to realize that all the time it is lying on a fishmonger's stall for sale.

In the days of primitive navigation salt water had been their great source of safety, but now it ceased in itself to afford its former protection, and, on the contrary, rather facilitated attack on Japan than otherwise. "We are surrounded by the sea, and therefore vulnerable at every point," were the words used in a petition from the Shogun to the Mikado in connection with foreign affairs. And, for a time, the Japanese failed to appreciate that this fact

had another aspect in which the sea could, with proper measures, be artificially converted into a very effective line of defence. For this lack of insight regarding a cardinal principle in the strategic policy of an island State they should not be too hastily blamed, when it is borne in mind that even in Great Britain, with the plainest lessons in the past before them, there have been men in high authority who persistently would not, or could not, appreciate it. In due course the Japanese came to realize that as the weapons whose moral or material effect broke down their long seclusion arrived in ships, and could arrive in no other way, an efficient sea-going armament was their own first requirement if they were to escape further humiliation or even disaster. When they found that an isolated existence was no longer possible, therefore, they made the creation of a standing national navy one of the earliest objects of their attention.

From very small beginnings this new fleet was carefully and judiciously developed, under the guidance of British officers, during a period of some twenty-five years, by which time its organizers felt that it was capable of asserting Japanese rights when threatened by a Power of minor maritime importance, such as China. Differences with the Government at Peking in regard to events in Korea led to an outbreak of hostilities in 1894, and, for the first time in 300 years, Japan undertook important operations of war on the high seas. In this conflict a maritime superiority was not of immediate urgency for her home defence, because the enemy was unprovided with land forces capable of carrying war into the Japanese home territories, even if safely transported there. But the Japanese authorities had the unmistakable lesson of their former Korean war as a guide, and fully understood that they could never properly safeguard their interests across the water as long as the enemy could offer serious opposition on that element.

They avoided the error, therefore, which had wrecked their schemes of conquest 300 years before, and lost no time in despatching their fleet in search of their opponents,

with orders to bring the latter to action wherever encountered. The successful issue of this policy relieved them of all anxiety regarding possible interference with the transport of their armies to points of strategic importance for the prosecution of a land campaign, and the final triumph of the Japanese arms on both elements marked, in effect, the conclusion of Japan's period of preparation to fill the rôle of a factor in the politics of the world, and the opening of her period of power. But the supreme ordeal of war with a first-class adversary remained before the position thus won could be regarded as stable.

This final test was not long in coming, and afforded to the watching nations of other lands unmistakable proof of the Japanese national aptitude for war, not only by the conduct of the actual operations, but by the steadiness with which they faced the varying fortunes of the most critical phase of their history. In a struggle with Russia a maritime superiority meant a great deal more to Japan than it had in her dispute with China, because it involved encounter with an opponent of immense military resources, fully capable of waging war against the Mikado's army, even in his own territories, if once landed there. Under these conditions the sea was a line of defence which the Japanese were compelled to hold at all costs, if their empire of two thousand years was to remain standing in any form but that of a crushed and possibly tributary State. Moreover, they were almost equally concerned to protect their interests in Korea, which were once again the immediate subject of dispute, and for that purpose armies dependent on a safe sea passage and uninterrupted communications had to be despatched to operate on continental soil.

The test was of the most searching nature, and imposed an almost crushing strain on the Japanese Navy, but it survived in the end, after a series of operations which in point of successful achievement against superior numbers will bear comparison with any in maritime history; and as the exploits of the seamen were emulated by their comrades on the land, the return of peace found

Japan securely established in a recognized place among the nations whose flags are symbols of real power. This position subsequent events have tended to consolidate more and more.

If we place all these phases of the story of the Japanese people in review, therefore, it becomes apparent that their national existence has been constantly affected by their sea surroundings in one way or another from the remotest periods, sometimes to their advantage and sometimes to their detriment. In past ages they made no organized effort to use the water as a line of strategic defence, but it did act, nevertheless, as a natural obstacle to foreign aggression. On the other hand, it operated as a natural deterrent to Japanese expansion and intercourse with the outer world, and facilitated a very shortsighted policy of seclusion during the vitally important seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the colonial empires of Western Powers were taking definite shape in many quarters of the globe, including the Far East, and all Europe was making great strides in the sciences of war and peace. With the abandonment of that policy under the stress of external pressure in the nineteenth century came a turning-point of critical importance, in which the Japanese began to recognize the importance of the sea as a means of defence more clearly, and eventually arrived at the understanding that it is on their fleet in the present conditions of science applied to war that their chief reliance must rest for the maintenance of their independence as a sovereign State. In fact, the preamble to the British Naval Discipline Act, which sets forth that "it is on the Navy, under the providence of God, that the wealth, safety, and well-being of the Empire chiefly depend," might be applied with equal truth to that other island people.

A general survey of this influence of the sea on Japanese political history in the past and present falls properly, therefore, into four main divisions. The first of these was the period in which a great measure of compulsory isolation was imposed by natural causes and the sea was

a safeguard. The second was the period in which the isolation was artificial and voluntary, although more complete, and the sea had become a source of danger. Taken together these two stages lasted for about 1,500 years. Then followed what might be called a period of probation, which did not last for more than forty, but in which they began to use the sea for defensive purposes, by establishing a fleet. Lastly came the era of power into which Japan has now entered. No man can foretell or even guess at its probable duration, but—unless the command of the air should ever supersede the command of the water—that must depend, in the first place, on the ability of the Japanese to hold their own afloat, as the necessary foundation of all safety to a nation of islanders, and the influence of the sea on their future must in consequence be at least as profound as on their past.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PERIOD OF NATURAL SECLUSION TO THE END OF THE MONGOL INVASION

THE Archipelago, or chain of islands, which forms the home of the fifty-five million souls comprising the Japanese race is approximately 1,150 English miles in length, and lies roughly in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction, with its southern extremity nearest to the Asiatic continent, from which it is separated by the Straits of Tsushima, exactly 100 nautical miles in width, the peninsula of Korea forming the opposite shore. The three principal islands, in succession from the north, are known on British Admiralty charts as Yezo, Nipon or Honshu, and Kiushiu; and although these are not the native names, nor, indeed, the names always used by European writers, they have obtained so general an acceptance by this time that they will be used in the pages which follow. Yezo, which has always been the least developed of the three, was not fully occupied nor governed by the Japanese till a much later period than the other two, and is still partly populated by a distinct aboriginal people. Nipon is the largest, and has always been the seat of government during the period of authentic history, whether the actual administration was in the hands of the Mikado himself or of the Shoguns who usurped his power. Kiushiu alone of the three has known the tread of an invading army, but the duration of that infliction was brief.

All three are possessed of many fine natural harbours, and offer the facilities for maritime enterprise which breed a seafaring coast population, and all are in parts rugged and mountainous inland. A large proportion of the Japanese race, therefore, are either mountaineers



or sea fishermen, the representatives of many generations brought up under natural surroundings of a description which, judging from the history of the ancient Greeks, or the Norwegian Vikings, or later of the Japanese themselves, tend to develop a fighting stock. All these islands were also able, till very recent times, to support the whole of their inhabitants from the products of their own soil and fisheries, without recourse to supplies from other lands, but this self-maintenance has reached its extreme limits from a constant increase in population.

To preserve the unity of a State whose component parts are separated by sea channels good water communications are obviously necessary, and ships form an important branch of national requirements. In Japan this demand was formerly emphasized by the rough nature of much of the country in the islands themselves, which made land routes difficult in many areas; and, as the geographical contour of the empire is long and narrow, coastwise traffic has always been able to form a useful alternative to inferior roads. So much was this recognized, even at an early period, that in an edict beginning with the words "Ships are necessary to Japan," an Emperor who ruled more than a thousand years ago ordered that every province was to be chargeable with the building and maintenance of a specified number in proportion to its resources. But although the aggregate volume of shipping which moved in Japanese waters even in early days was large, and the ports were well filled, the vessels themselves were mostly small and seldom engaged in foreign voyages, even when that was not prohibited by their navigation laws—unless, indeed, as pirates. In part this was due to the self-contained nature of Japan, whose population was independent of foreign trade or supplies; but in part also it was probably due, in the days of primitive navigation, to climatic conditions, for the seas which surround the coasts are often subject to severe weather. All through the winter northerly winds prevail in the Straits of Tsushima with some force, and although in the summer months fine and calm spells are very common, they may be broken

at any moment by a violent typhoon between June and October. These dangers to navigation were without a doubt a factor of considerable importance in reducing the risks of invasion in former ages, but they also acted as a deterrent to the expansion of a seagoing mercantile marine.

The nearest land on the Asiatic continent to Japan is Korea, now a part of the Japanese Empire, but which in the very early days of Japanese history consisted of three separate kingdoms; although at a later period these became united under one Sovereign. The Korean peninsula is in the main a fertile, open country, bordered by a coast with good harbours on the south and west; and the ancient population were almost exclusively agriculturists and fishermen, like the Japanese themselves, though in advance of the latter in a knowledge of the arts and sciences of the day, and better shipbuilders. But they were always inferior in natural aptitude for war. From the remotest period its geographical proximity has always invested Korea with special importance in Japanese eyes, and Japanese foreign policy has always made it a cardinal point of endeavour to prevent any powerful alien State from obtaining a foothold in that land, though not invariably with success. For such an attitude their own past experiences afford a good reason. Korea was the advanced base of the only great enterprise ever undertaken by an alien conqueror for the subjugation of Japan; and up to the end of the nineteenth century it was the only foreign country in which a Japanese army had ever conducted operations on a large scale.

Japanese history is legendary and largely mythical in its earlier chapters; but it remains a sufficiently established fact that in the second century of our era the Empress Jengo ordered a large expedition to invade Korea, which was entirely successful in its object. The ancient accounts of this enterprise, however, are as full of miraculous occurrences and divine interpositions as those of the siege of Troy, and the campaign, as recorded, is not of much help in consequence to the study of a subject of

intense practical application. Therefore, beyond briefly observing that operations of war on an important scale of some kind did take place with results satisfactory to the invaders, which still retain a great hold on Japanese imagination, no further reference to that event will be made in these pages, which only endeavour to deal with the incidents of authentic history.

For the first twelve centuries of the Christian era the Japanese were left, as far as any records exist, unmolested and unthreatened by any external danger—although incessantly fighting among themselves—and during that period only one descent took place upon their shores which was of sufficient importance to be noticed at all, although even that in no way endangered their national independence. The accounts of this affair read precisely like those of the Viking or Danish raids on the shores of Northumberland or Norfolk. A tribe of Manchurian pirates, known as “Tois,” inhabited the mainland coast between Korea and Saghalien, and about the year 1019 extended their depredations so far beyond their natural scope as to despatch a fleet of twenty vessels to seize what spoil came within their reach in the way of plunder or prisoners on the shores of Japan. No estimate of their total numbers is known to exist, but the contemporary descriptions of their ships and their methods of fighting are fairly detailed, from which we learn that the former were about 50 feet long and carried forty oars each. These figures, if accurate, are interesting, because they indicate that the vessels must have carried a double tier of oars, like the biremes of Greece or Carthage. It would be impracticable to place twenty oars a side in a single tier along the gunwale of a craft only 50 feet long, unless used as paddles after the fashion of a savage’s canoe, and paddles can only be used in that way in a boat of very low freeboard, unfit for sea work over more than very short distances. With a double tier, on the other hand, a high freeboard design would be necessary, giving good sea-going qualities if the beam was adequate, as we may suppose it to have been, and a vessel of that size

would easily carry a hundred men under moderately favourable conditions of weather. From this, if the total force is estimated at about 5,000 men, it may very probably be somewhere near the mark.

The Toi raiders began by attacking the little island of Tsushima, lying in their path, half-way between the southern point of Korea and the main Japanese coasts, which nearly 900 years later was destined to give its name to the greatest naval victory in Japanese annals. The small garrison fought to the last man, and were exterminated without any material gain to the attackers, who then sailed on to Kiushiu. For some reason the Japanese failed to interfere with their disembarkation, possibly because nothing was known of their approach until too late to collect a fleet of armed junks, or a land force to oppose them on the beach. Having disembarked, they marched inland on a general foray, and an interesting account is given in the old records of their fighting tactics. Their battle formation was in three lines, with spears in the front rank, swords in the second, and bows in the third. But this formation, although, perhaps, well suited to the open hillsides of Manchuria, must have been very difficult to maintain on a broad front, in a country of mountain, forest, and marsh, such as Japan, where every level lies under rice cultivation, knee-deep in mud and water, and abundant natural cover exists for the skirmishing archers who were the forerunners of the riflemen sharpshooters of a later age. The Japanese *Samurai* of the earlier periods was not an adept at massed tactics, and to him a battle was more in the nature of an aggregation of personal encounters than an occasion for co-ordinated effort in which individual action has no play; but as an individual combatant he was unsurpassed, and in his own land the natural features gave every advantage to a loose system of fighting. As a consequence the raiders were soon in difficulties with a defending force, hastily assembled by the Japanese Governor of the province; and in time encountered such determined and sanguinary opposition that their advance came to a halt, after suffer-

ing severely from the defending archers and from ambushed bodies of swordsmen, who broke into their ranks at close quarters, regardless of their own lives. Finding that further progress was impossible, their leaders at length gave the order to retire again to their boats; but, as the withdrawal seems to have been carried out in good order, we may infer that the Japanese success was not overwhelming, and this view receives confirmation from the fact that the Tois by no means abandoned their efforts as a result of an initial failure. It was evidently their intention, after the usual practice of coastal raiders encountering unexpected resistance at one point, to try their fortune at some other, in the hope that by moving quickly they could carry out an effective foray before succour arrived. But foul winds prevented their immediate departure from the harbour in which they had first arrived, and gave the Japanese time to collect a fleet of thirty-eight vessels for a counter-attack, which was delivered with such effect that the enemy were driven to sea. Unfortunately, no detailed account of this naval engagement exists—the first in authentic Japanese history; but, as the old records make no mention of captures on either side, it would appear unlikely that boarding tactics were any feature of the fight, which more probably took the form of an archery action, wherein the enemy's heavy-armed spearmen could take no part, while the Japanese vessels, although inferior in numbers, were yet so crowded with bowmen that they could establish a superiority of fire. But the invaders even then did not abandon their project, and as the Japanese lost touch with them at nightfall, either through lack of energetic leading or in the belief that they had withdrawn altogether, they only withdrew far enough to reorganize, and then descended to another part of the coast farther south, from which they carried off 1,200 prisoners, and sailed away before a rescue could be effected.

Viewed in the light of immediate results, this raid does not assume the proportions of an incident of real importance in Japanese history. A few wretched captives were

carried off by a comparative handful of men, who did not represent a portion of the armed strength of a powerful army with plenty more to follow, but merely the supreme effort of a relatively small tribe. But the incident did, nevertheless, serve as a sort of unintentional reconnaissance in force for the whole of Eastern Asia, and its effects were in reality considerable. A certain amount of intercourse had been in progress between Japan and China, chiefly through the movements of the Buddhist priests and others, learned in the civil arts and knowledge of the period, who had been encouraged by the Mikado to visit Japan as teachers; and a small volume of trade also passed both ways. But very little was known on the mainland of the defensive capabilities of the Japanese, as these had never been put to the test, and many rumours were current as to the supposed wealth which the islands contained. Had the Toi raiders encountered a feeble opposition, and returned with a substantial booty, even in the shape of captives alone, their first enterprise would certainly have been repeated, and the knowledge of their success, circulating in time through China and Korea, would in all probability have induced other and more important imitators to follow their example in that predatory age. But their decidedly rough reception indicated unmistakably that no aggressive action directed against Japan could hope for much profit, unless organized on so large a scale that the necessary number of ships to carry it could not possibly be found. And so, for 200 years more, Japan remained unmolested, thanks to an insular position and a valiant people. In point of fact, the Japanese seafarers turned the tables by taking to piracy on an extensive scale themselves, and became the scourge of the mainland coasts.

In the early years of the thirteenth century, however, a menace to Japanese liberty began to take shape, which presented a parallel to the danger to England arising at the periods of the dominations of Philip II. of Spain and Napoleon on the Continent of Europe. In the year 1162 a lad, afterwards known to history as Jenghiz Khan,

was born in a herdsman's tent on the desolate plateau of Mongolia, who, in virtue of a superlative genius for leading men and an insatiable lust for power, had, before his death, brought not only all Mongolia, but all the central zone of Asia, from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific, under his domination, and left one of the most widely execrated names ever borne by a human being. In due course his vast domains descended to his grandson, Kublai Khan, who also inherited much of his ambition and ability, and spent his life in extending these domains still farther, with such success that when his reign in its turn ended he was ruling—according to Howorth—over a larger area of the earth's surface than any monarch in history before or since. It was his eventual aim to compel all Asia and its adjacent islands to acknowledge his sovereignty, either as part of the dominions under his direct administration, or as tributary States, and he intended that Japan should be included in this colossal scheme.

Kublai began with China, in the northern part of which he was already engaged in a campaign on behalf of his brother, whom he succeeded as the reigning Khan when the latter died. China was at that time under the Sung dynasty, with its capital at Nankin, and covered an area of about two-thirds of its present extent, in which stood numerous large walled cities; but its many millions of inhabitants were engaged chiefly in agriculture, as their descendants are still.

The Mongols broke in from the north, where Kublai founded the city of Peking, in 1264, as his future capital, and, in the process of time, surrounded it by walls twenty-seven miles in circuit, 50 feet high and 40 feet thick, of which the greater part still stand. He then commenced a series of conquering campaigns, in which his armies, under the immediate command of some very able leaders, advanced irresistibly southward for fifteen years, annexing province after province, and city after city, until by the year 1279 they had traversed the whole of the Chinese Empire, and entered the gates of Canton, where the last stand of the Sung dynasty was made. His troops are

sometimes referred to as the Mongolian "hordes," but in the ordinary acceptance of that expression, as distinguishing a rabble from an army, it does not apply, for, although including almost every nationality in Asia, they were highly trained and disciplined, and equipped with all the most up-to date appliances of war, including ballistas and other engines for siege work. Their organization into units was very complete, and their movements were conducted with a scientific precision and strategic grasp comparable to the operations of Hannibal or Buonaparte. Nor were they opposed by a feeble enemy in their conquest of China. The Chinese military mandarins of our own time may rightly hold a poor place in the estimation of soldiers, but their forerunners of the thirteenth century frequently displayed the greatest skill and courage, and not a few of the cities were only reduced by starvation after long investment and desperate resistance, in which the defending leaders fell themselves. When at its zenith, therefore, the military power of the Mongols was a very serious danger indeed to all the independent nations of Asia.

It was while his main campaigns in China were still in their early stage that Kublai first turned his eyes towards Japan. That fateful gaze had boded ill for the freedom of every land upon which it had previously fallen, but an obstacle, of a kind of which he had no previous experience, now lay in his line of vision. Korea was already part of the Mongolian Empire when he succeeded to the throne—although her King was allowed a nominal power as a tributary ruler—and Japan was only 100 miles farther off, a distance which his troops would have covered in a few days on the land. But, unfortunately for his plans, it was 100 miles of salt water with no way round, an element which very few of the Mongols—a nation of inland stockriders—had ever seen, and upon which they never, to the end, proved formidable. Ultimately, it was to frustrate his utmost efforts against Japan, just as effectually as it frustrated those of Napoleon against Great



Britain, although its effect did not take shape through precisely the same chain of causes.

The problem was of a kind new to Kublai, but no form of obstacle ever diverted him in the pursuit of his vast ambitions, and, as the situation presented military difficulties of a special form, he opened his advances towards Japan by a recourse to diplomacy, to which he was always ready to turn as an alternative to military measures, if the occasion appeared to require it, and it seemed to have a possibility of success. Unfortunately the old accounts of the fateful series of events which followed are extremely vague, and sometimes discrepant, especially as to dates; but certain points are well established, and from these we learn that about the year 1268 he despatched two envoys with a letter to be delivered to the Mikado, of which the principal sentences are given thus by Howorth:

“The most powerful rampart between small countries and their strong neighbours is peace between their Sovereigns. This political axiom, supported by long experience, becomes most certain when it refers to the weak neighbours of an empire such as I have received from my ancestors, which is especially favoured by Heaven. I am now master of China. A crowd of kingdoms filled with fear and respect have submitted to my laws notwithstanding their distance. . . . The Korean King, whom we number among our subjects, touched by our generosity, came to the foot of our throne to do homage. I, in return, covered him with favours, determined to treat him rather as a father than as an Emperor and master. You and your people have surely heard of this. Korea is close to Japan. Since the foundation of your kingdom you have constantly trafficked with China. How is it that you have never sent anyone to my Court since I came to the throne? Have you not heard of my accession? I have sent you two officers to remind you of this and secure a mutual friendship which will be the bond of a lasting peace. The wise men who are about me tell me that all men are brothers; the universe consists of but one family, and how can useful rules and good laws be upheld in a family where there is discord? Woe to those who love confusion and wish for war. O King, think of this, you and your people.”

Some of the assertions in this letter were not quite accurate. His treatment of Korea had been anything but generous, as the Japanese knew well enough, and he was not really master of China till nearly ten years later, for he had not at the time reached farther south than the Yang-tse-kiang. But Northern China was certainly under his heel; and in any case a precise adherence to facts has never been regarded, even in Europe, as an essential in diplomatic correspondence. The tone of the letter, as it stood, would obviously have permitted of only one answer from a land State accessible to the march of Kublai's troops, unless its people preferred extermination to subjection. With an island State inhabited by a virile race, the case was altogether different; and Kublai was so shrewd a man that he probably realized this, and was merely feeling his way.

The first two envoys never got beyond Korea, where the local authorities impressed them with such alarming accounts of the dangers of their mission, that they preferred to face even the wrath of their master than to proceed. What fate awaited their hesitation there is nothing to indicate, but two others who took their places evidently found it expedient to obey orders, whatever the risks on the other side might be, for they arrived in due course in a Japanese port, from which they were forwarded, under guard, to the capital, where they presented Kublai's letter. Here they were forcibly detained for six months, and then sent back with no answer, but this treatment was mild as compared to the fate which awaited envoys who followed later.

It seems quite possible that Kublai anticipated the likelihood of some such result, for he was ready to begin his preparations for more forcible measures, although these presented considerable difficulties from the outset. As in the case of Philip II. with the Armada, and Napoleon with his flat-bottomed craft for crossing the English Channel, it was necessary for him to commence operations by building his floating means of transport; in which respect, as in many others, the whole story of the project

offers parallels to various schemes for the invasion of Great Britain. But it was quite impossible, with the resources at his disposal, to build ships in anything like adequate numbers, which, knowing nothing of nautical affairs, and refusing, like Napoleon, to take the advice of those who did, he failed at first to appreciate or believe. The largest type of junk which the shipwrights upon whom he had to rely were competent to put in the water was only capable of transporting, perhaps, 100 soldiers in addition to her crew, provided she was not further burdened with campaigning supplies and horses, but a proportionately lesser number of soldiers if a load of these had to be carried. Apparently the organizers of the proposed expedition considered it necessary that a large stock of supplies and horses should go with it, for their calculations only left room for forty soldiers per vessel on an average, and the utmost efforts of the shipbuilders on the seacoasts which acknowledged Kublai's rule at that time—of whom the majority were Koreans—were unequal to putting more than 1,000 such vessels in hand. The King of Korea protested, in fact, that even that number was in excess of any possible production.

Kublai was forced to realize, therefore, at the start that the fighting strength of the invading force must be limited to 40,000 men, and it seems scarcely credible that he could have believed that so comparatively small an expedition would suffice to conquer all Japan. Nevertheless he issued imperative orders for 1,000 ships to be built, and at the same time imposed upon the Koreans the further task of placing a large tract in the northern part of their country under special cultivation, as a source of future food-supplies for the prospective army of invasion. Presumably he either hoped to intimidate the Japanese by a demonstration, or by the mere knowledge of his preparations, or else intended to seize one of their outlying islands and hold it as a hostage, or as an advanced base for a larger force to follow. Having issued these instructions, he allowed five years for the preparations to mature—for with an inflexible determination of purpose he

combined great powers of patience—and meanwhile proceeded with the execution of his campaigns of conquest in other and more immediately promising directions. At the same time, he never relaxed his diplomatic efforts towards Japan, and, although precise information on this point is lacking, it seems evident, from sundry references in old chronicles, that several more envoys were despatched during this period without any better results than the first. One of his ships also, by his orders, seized and carried off two Japanese men of high rank from Tsushima; and these they sent to Pekin, where they were treated well by Kublai, who, with a view to impressing them with his power, showed them his palace and his army, and then sent them back to Japan to spread the tale.

By the end of 1273—all these dates being approximate only—his preparations were complete, or at least sufficiently so to proceed with the enterprise. Only 900 ships had been launched, but 40,000 troops, with all their campaigning supplies, were concentrated and ready, and it was not considered that the shortage of sea transport was great enough to justify further delay, as the Japanese had shown no signs whatever of submitting to his demands. In the month of November, therefore, when the typhoon season is well over, the troops were embarked and the fleet of transports sailed. Operations were commenced by attacks upon the small islands of Tsushima and Iki, which lay on the way, and where once again the garrisons fought to the last man, although an escaping vessel hastened to Japan with the news. This gave the Japanese a brief interval for preparations, although they could not possibly tell on what part of their coast the blow would fall—the inevitable strategic disadvantage under which the defenders in such a case must labour, if they are not strong enough at sea to deal with the enemy in his passage. Kublai's fleet, on continuing their voyage, shaped course for Hakozaki Bay—a very fine natural harbour on the north shore of Kiushiu, which island, as observed on a previous page, is the southernmost of the Japanese chain, and therefore the nearest to Korea, though not the metro-

politan centre of government. The selection of Kiushiu as a first destination may have been due to a desire to get the sea passage over, or it may have been deliberately planned, on the grounds that the expedition was not on a sufficient scale to strike at the heart of the Japanese Empire, though possibly strong enough to seize an extremity before a proper defending force could be hurried to the spot, and there establish itself till reinforced from Korea. This policy would be greatly facilitated by Kublai's undisputed command of the sea, by which he

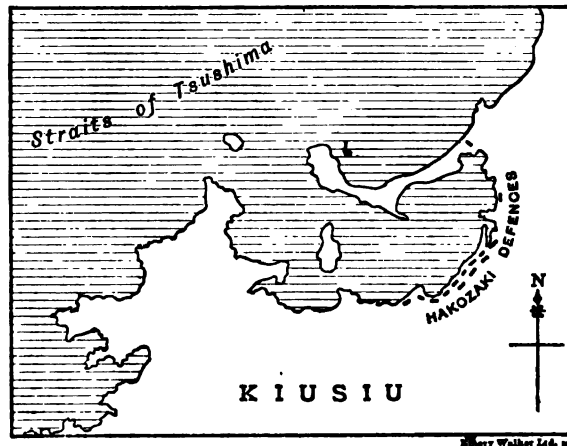


FIG. 1.—HAKOZAKI BAY (MODERN FUKUOKA).

Forts indicated thus ----

could hope to prevent succour reaching Kiushiu from Nipon or the other islands. At any rate, the selection was well justified on strategic grounds, in so far as the whole adventure was justifiable on any sound principles of war at all.

The actual disembarkation in Hakozi Bay seems to have been effected without opposition on the beach itself, but as soon as the Mongols advanced inland their troubles began. The provincial Governor had rapidly assembled a numerous force of local levies, all skilled fighters in their own kind of ground; and although these

were inferior tacticians to the Mongols and had to fall back at first, their numbers were so constantly increased that at last they were able to make a stand behind a ditch or entrenchment, extending for several miles across the invaders' line of march. Towards evening the Mongols found their position very difficult, and returned again to the beach, although without being followed up. But they seem to have feared the consequences of a possible counter-attack at night at close quarters, in which the Japanese swordsmen would have been terrible adversaries and their own superiority in field tactics would have availed them little; for eventually they re-embarked altogether, under cover of darkness and pouring rain. The re-embarkation suffered no interference, because the Japanese were not near enough to realize in the dark what was happening; but towards early morning the weather came decisively to their assistance, for the rain proved to be the precursor to wind, as is so often the case, and a violent gale set in from the northward, the only quarter from which the bay is exposed. The Korean crews, fearing to be driven on shore, slipped or cut their cables, and the whole fleet struggled out for open water, but many were wrecked in the attempt, and all the rest scattered, the remnants of the expedition returning by degrees in straggled confusion to various points on their own coasts, with a loss of about 300 ships and 20,000 men killed in action or drowned.

This was Kublai's first experience of warfare associated with the sea—although by no means his last; and his immediate failure after five years of laborious preparation, though trivial as compared with the terrible and overwhelming disaster which was in fate for his second attempt a few years later, was nevertheless of sufficient magnitude to have discouraged a man of less resolute character. But, as already observed, the great Mongol conqueror never allowed himself to be diverted from his purpose, and his few rebuffs only served to stimulate his efforts the more. Without delay he issued orders for the building of another 1,000 ships, and his attitude towards the

Japanese was so much the reverse of chastened, that he sent an envoy to the Mikado to summon him to Peking at once to answer for his actions. The Japanese, in no respect alarmed by this outburst, and too deeply committed for temporizing measures, beheaded the envoy and all his suite on the execution ground for common criminals, on their arrival at the Japanese capital. After that Kublai kept his diplomats at home for a time, but nursed his wrath and proceeded with his schemes. He was not so weak a character, however, as to allow his haste for revenge to spoil his chances, and spent another five years in patiently waiting for his plans to mature once again. All through this period his armies engaged in China were moving victoriously southwards, and as one seaport after another on the Chinese coast fell into his hands, so his resources in shipping increased enormously from year to year, and his prospects of success against Japan improved in proportion, for his resources in men were always overwhelming.

Meanwhile the Japanese, on their part, were fully alive to the extreme gravity of their situation and strenuously employed in preparing for its developments. The tremendous menace which had rolled irresistibly across three-fourths of the Asiatic Continent, crushing everything before it, had now turned most definitely in their direction, and although, indeed, an immovable obstacle was in its path, which must break much of its force, it was impossible to estimate whether it would be broken sufficiently to save Japan. They entertained no illusions whatever as to the nature of the fate which would await them if Kublai once gained a firm footing on their territory; and an appeal for unity in the presence of an appalling common danger, issued by order of the Mikado, is said to have produced a condition of freedom from internal dissension unknown in Japan for generations. The fighting element in the population was thoroughly reorganized, reinforced with picked levies, and improved in equipment and training. Defences were erected at all the principal harbours on the Korean side, strategic

roads improved, and a fighting flotilla established, towards the manning of which every maritime province had to contribute. As Japan had no large vessels, however, there were only light craft and fireships.

Six years passed in this way, with both sides preparing for a final struggle, which Kublai knew would tax his utmost efforts to bring to successful issue, and the Japanese knew must prove a matter of life or death to their independence as a nation. By the year 1280 Kublai's preparations were complete. Before that date his conquest of China to its extreme southern limits had placed at his disposal a mercantile fleet of about 3,500 junks of different sizes, in addition to his new fleet in Korea. A few of these vessels were undoubtedly very large for that period, if Marco Polo's accounts are to be believed, requiring crews of 300 men each. But the majority were no heavier than the junks used in the first expedition, and the carrying capacity of the whole fleet in Chinese waters, for the comparatively long voyage to Japan, was only estimated at 100,000 men with supplies, water, and horses. An army of that size was accordingly assembled in readiness for embarkation in the ports of China, with a very large allowance of stores to provide for a long absence. Simultaneously, another army of 50,000 men with supplies was being assembled in Korea, with 1,000 vessels as transport. The two forces were entirely separate commands, and for convenience may be designated as the northern or Korean army, and the southern or Chinese. It is said that the former, although the smaller in numbers, was composed of Kublai's best Mongolian legions, and formed the spear-point of the expedition. The southern armament was more mixed, and consisted in part of Chinese levies of less formidable fighting quality.

We see, therefore, that Kublai was now about to launch his enterprise with a total army of 150,000 men—that is to say, a force of nearly four times the strength of his first expedition, and which in fact represented the very maximum, in point of numbers, that could be embarked



by using the whole sea-going tonnage on the coasts of his vast empire in the East, inclusive of a large number of vessels specially built under pressure. As far as troops were concerned, he could have trebled these numbers without much difficulty, if ships had been available to carry them, and here lay the decisive factor of the whole situation. An army of 150,000 men was not really sufficient to conquer Japan, but the sea prevented any larger force from getting there, because, in the state of human progress at that time, not even the utmost exertions of the monarch of the most extensive empire of the period could overcome the practical difficulties of maritime conveyance. Murdoch has estimated that Japan, by an extreme effort, might just possibly have raised a defending army of 400,000 men. No statement of the force which actually was raised is known to exist, but even if Murdoch's estimate is halved—and it certainly seems rather high—and if allowance is made, further, for the advantages which the attack possesses of selecting its point of descent, it is evident that Kublai's schemes ran but an indifferent chance of success, unless he could transport at least a quarter of a million men to the Japanese coasts—that is to say, nearly double the number for which he could possibly find tonnage.

Kublai, however, had conquered a country of twenty times the population of Japan, and had perhaps some justification for the belief that nothing could stand before his troops, for up till then they had indeed proved invincible, even against greatly superior numbers. He embarked on the project with confidence accordingly and, as already observed, was ready to move by the year 1280. Before actually setting his forces in motion, nevertheless, he made one final effort to settle matters diplomatically, and despatched one more unfortunate envoy and suite to demand surrender. But by now the Japanese were so deeply stirred in their national pride, that they treated this mission even more summarily than its predecessors of six years before. The members of the latter were permitted at least to reach the Japanese capital before

being executed, but these new arrivals were beheaded on the beach as they landed. Nothing therefore remained but for Kublai to go ahead, and in doing so he opened one of the most fateful chapters in Eastern history.

When the armies had been embarked, the first move to be made was the concentration of the fleet of some 4,500 vessels of varying sizes, from ports hundreds of miles apart—a purely maritime problem of vast magnitude and complexity for the admirals in command, involving many considerations of which modern seamen have no experience or even idea. The governing factor of the whole situation was the north-east monsoon, which blows down the coast of China all through the winter with sufficient force to make it impossible for sailing craft of the smaller sizes, such as formed the bulk of the transport fleet, to work a passage to the northward during the period from November till March. The concentration, therefore, had to be planned for some date between April and October, and, as the spring months are a time of calms and variable winds, in which only slow progress under sail is possible, the final assembly could not be expected to be complete before May. But by that time the typhoon season is near, and although fair weather usually prevails in the Eastern summer, one of these tremendous hurricanes may take place on any day from June till October, and especially in August. A typhoon is the chief anxiety of the seamen of the Far East to this day, and in Kublai's time no vessel existed which had much chance of surviving one if caught at sea. Nor was it practicable to assemble the fleet in Korean ports in the spring and wait till the typhoon season was over, because the supplies and provisions there available were only sufficient for the northern army. The southern army had to bring everything of that nature in the transports with it, and began using up its rations from the day it embarked. Time was therefore a serious consideration, and a delay all through the summer was out of the question. The whole enterprise was, in fact, unavoidably planned for execution with a fatal possibility hanging over it from the outset, and perhaps

only a seaman can properly imagine the constant anxiety of mind under which the admirals must have laboured. Kublai was compelled to gamble with the weather, and he lost the final throw; but of that more hereafter.

Judging by the course of subsequent events, it would seem that the admirals decided to concentrate at a sea rendezvous near the island of Iki in the straits, for which each fleet was to make separately, so as to arrive in May. But in putting the two armies under separate commanders Kublai had acted with less than his usual soundness of judgment, and this mistake gave rise to a certain degree of early misfortune, for the northern commander, being all ready to begin long before his colleague from the south could arrive, decided to undertake initial operations on his own account by attacking the islands of Tsushima and Iki unsupported, where he evidently expected an easy success. He sailed, accordingly, for that purpose in March. The former fate of the garrison had not been forgotten by the Japanese, however, and the islands were now held in such strength, that the Mongols on landing were met and driven back to their boats, after suffering so heavily that further attempts were abandoned, and the ships returned to Korea amid much dissension and recrimination for the failure. There they remained till the arrival of the southern fleet at the rendezvous was nearly due, and then sailed to join it.

Actual accounts of the great concentration do not exist, but, from the course of subsequent events, it was evidently successfully carried out during the month of May in accordance with arrangements. Many days were doubtless required to complete the assembly, for to control the movements of 4,500 vessels of various sizes and rates of sailing, so as to ensure precise arrival on a given date, would be impossible in practice, and the task was so gigantic that its actual achievement without endless delay indicates a high efficiency in the naval administration. If we consider all the labour and organization required at the present day to embark and to transport an expedition of 50,000 men and supplies, with every facility in

the way of large steamers, capable of carrying unbroken military units up to battalions or even brigades, and able to move in company whatever the direction of the wind, with almost exact adherence to a programme, we may form some idea of the problem of carrying an army of three times that number, split up into mere platoons, in thousands of junks no bigger than coasting ketches whose movements were necessarily slow and uncertain. To keep together the embarked fractions of one military command corresponding even to a battalion, the speed of its transports had to be controlled by that of the slowest sailer; and even when they were moving in good order, a sudden shift of wind might throw them all into confusion. And when, in addition to that, the movements of the various transport divisions had again to be more or less regulated in relation to each other, so as to keep the larger units intact, and the subordinate leaders of various ranks had to receive their orders from day to day, or at least from time to time, the extraordinary magnitude and difficulty of the naval staff work becomes apparent. Taken as a whole, the testimony of events seems to indicate that the operation was in fact one of the very greatest achievements in nautical history.

It was successfully completed by early in June, and then the whole enormous armada of 4,500 vessels moved on with the least possible delay, but detached a division to seize Iki, off which the rendezvous had been arranged. Whether their next main movements were as ordered by Kublai himself, or as decided by the naval and military leaders, we do not know, but from their nature it would seem as if they were more influenced by nautical than by strategic considerations; because the armada headed for Kiushiu once more instead of for Nipon, which, under the circumstances of their second enterprise, was a bad policy from a purely strategic point of view. If the Mongols really believed that they had a good prospect of subjugating Japan, they should have availed themselves of their complete freedom from opposition at sea to aim their thrust at the heart of their adversary, instead of

an extremity, and landed in Nipon as the centre of administration and residence of authority, which contains several harbours within comparatively easy marching distance of what was then the capital and seat of government. The fact that they did not do so requires some explanation, but nothing is on record on that point, and we can only surmise that some very compelling consideration influenced their plans at which we are left to guess. The choice of Kiushiu, as the nearest island within reach, suggests that for some reason of great importance they wished to get the sea passage over as quickly as possible, and, in fact, we may judge that their haste was extreme, because the western extremity of Nipon was only a short day's sailing farther on. Moreover, it seems most significant that the Japanese on their part evidently expected that Kiushiu would be the point of attack, for it was there that they made their main arrangements for defence. Some very urgent consideration, therefore, recognized by both sides, must have impelled the invaders to shorten the sea trip at all costs; and nothing is apparent that would account for this, unless it was that the ever-present dread of a typhoon, while the vast fleet was still at sea, so completely possessed the leaders' minds as to dominate all their actions, even to the extent of ignoring the strategical exigencies of the situation. For such an attitude, indeed, their subsequent experiences afforded ample justification, whether it really was the cause which governed their decision or not; and for Kiushiu they certainly steered without any sign of hesitation that can be traced.

Meanwhile the Japanese were fully aware that Kublai's forces were on the move, and the unsuccessful attacks on Tsushima and Iki in March warned them that his blow was about to fall. It would be wrong to say that they were terrified, but they were certainly in a very anxious frame of mind. Every man fit to bear arms was now in the ranks or afloat in the light flotillas, and every other preparation that could be made was complete. The non-combatants in the population, headed by the old men and

the principal dignitaries of the State, flocked in crowds to all the temples, where the bells rang without ceasing day and night, and the priests of every sect in the Empire supplicated as unceasingly for Divine assistance. The provincial and district commanders had received their final instructions and completed their dispositions, the scouting ships were out at sea, the troops were under arms, and the whole attitude of the defenders cannot perhaps be better indicated than by quoting a Japanese expression intended to denote the appearance of men in a state of strained apprehension: "They gazed to their front and swallowed their spittle."

It was on or about June 23—according to Murdoch—that the sails of Kublai's enormous fleet were first sighted from the headlands of Kiushiu, covering the whole northern horizon; and although the choice of that island for the general disembarkation was strategically indefensible—even if well-advised for other reasons—the plan of operations to be carried out on arrival on its coasts was probably the best that could be devised as a first stage in the campaign in the circumstances. The fleet with the northern army steered for Hakozaki Bay, the point of attack of the former expedition; but in the intervening years it had been strongly fortified, and the direct threat to its front required to be supplemented by a threat on flank or rear. The fleet with the southern army therefore made for the Gulf of Imari—a good harbour about thirty miles to the westward, where the defences were weak and an easy advance inland was doubtless anticipated. This move must have possessed the further advantages of leaving the Japanese uncertain as to which was the main attack, and of avoiding an overcrowding in either harbour.

As the defenders were not strong at sea, neither invading fleet seems to have encountered any opposition in entering their respective anchorages, and the northern fleet moored in Hakozaki Bay, head and stern in a line; with the vessels close alongside each other, and as near as possible to the shore, in order to breach the defences

on the sea-front by a bombardment of heavy stones thrown from siege catapults and other appliances of that nature with which they had been specially armed. From the contemporary accounts it would further appear that they were lashed together by chains for mutual support, and that planks were laid from ship to ship, in order to facilitate a rapid rally to any vessel in case of a boarding attack by Japanese boats coming in from the light flotillas hovering about outside. Several such attacks were made with great determination, but although they were sanguinary affairs the line remained unbroken. The troops were landed at an unfortified part of the bay and began a series of assaults on the Japanese defences, in which they encountered a most obstinate resistance and suffered heavy losses. The southern fleet arrived in detachments in the Gulf of Imari a little later, and the whole southern army of 100,000 men landed without interference, and began an advance towards Hakoziaki over an intervening tract of high and broken country. But a strong Japanese field-army was soon encountered, and a series of desperate battles in the hills ensued, lasting for many days almost continuously, at the end of which the invaders were held up everywhere. The Japanese light flotillas also succeeded in cutting out, or setting on fire, many vessels lying in the more exposed outer berths.

July passed in this way without any real gains to Kublai's cause, and by the beginning of August the Mongol generals must have begun to realize that ultimate success was becoming very doubtful. Events were proving that the armies at their disposal were inadequate for the task in hand, and they had no hope whatever of reinforcements. The southern troops had been brought to a standstill far from their objective, and the northern were engaged in fruitless efforts to reduce the Hakoziaki fortress, which held out obstinately against stone bombardment, fire attacks, and every other form of assault, from land or sea, known to the military science of the time. Heavy losses had been suffered by the invaders, and their

supplies must have been getting depleted without any prospect of replenishment. Under these circumstances a situation was soon reached in which the position of the southern army was becoming untenable, and its commander ordered a withdrawal. It may be that he intended to transfer his operations to another part of the coast, but it is said that some of his troops were getting demoralized under the Japanese counter-attacks, and, in any case, he never had the chance. Accordingly he retired from his advanced positions, and even re-embarked the greater part of his command. His colleague of the northern army still held on to his position before Hakozaki, however, where he was not as yet in actual danger of being driven into the sea, and his fleet in the Bay were in immediate touch. But his force was much reduced by losses in battle and sickness.

Matters were in this condition when, on or about August 15, the very danger took shape which had always been apprehended by the invaders, although much less so since their safe arrival in harbour. A typhoon of quite exceptional violence burst on the northern coasts of Kiushiu, and once again the elements came to the assistance of Japan in the most dramatic and decisive of fashions. In the matter of weather the fortune of the Mongols had so far been good, but now it took a much worse turn than either side had reason to expect, for this particular storm was not only of unusual severity, but the path it followed was the very worst it could have taken from the invaders' standpoint, as it blew onshore. Typhoons in the open are nearly always a serious matter for sailing vessels of any kind, and cases have occurred in which they have caused the loss of even full-powered mail-steamers; but in harbour they are as a rule less to be feared, because the tremendous seas which are the chief danger do not find scope to develop their full violence. If Kublai's immense armament had been caught on the passage, disaster would have been a foregone conclusion, but the Mongols were justified in supposing that, with the passage safely over, the worst of their dangers were behind



them. On comparatively rare occasions, nevertheless, the force of the blast alone is sufficient to blow every vessel from her moorings, even in a well-sheltered port—as, for example, in the case of the great typhoon which devastated Hong-Kong in 1906—and it happened to be a storm of this order which fell on Kublai's fleets. The old records state that the wind was from the north and west, from which, by applying the law of revolving storms, it seems probable that the vortex was travelling north-eastward through the Straits of Tsushima, parallel to the coast of Kiushiu at no great distance. The effect of the hurricane upon the thousands of transport junks crowding the waters of Hakozaki and Imari Bays was simply appalling, and the scene presented as it rushed across those anchorages, sweeping everything before it in one common doom, must have been one of the most awful in the whole history of war. Even when witnessed apart from any destructive results a typhoon offers a most impressive spectacle. The blackened skies, the mountainous seas, and the roaring fury of the wind, all combine to produce an effect which has few equals in nature. But when to these is added the crash of colliding ships and falling masts, the parting of cables, and the overwhelming of entire fleets, no effort of the imagination can really give any idea of the sight. Moreover, to complete the awful picture of destruction in the water, a merciless slaughter was taking place on the land. The Japanese were not slow to avail themselves of the intervention of Nature on their behalf, and, abandoning their defensive attitude, fell upon the enemy's forces still on shore, which in the absence of any help or support from their comrades afloat, were soon overborne and exterminated. Even the unfortunate wretches who tried to swim to the shore from the sinking vessels were cut to pieces as they struggled exhausted from the surf, till the beaches were red, and for this the Japanese had at least the extenuation that their victims were the aggressors and never gave quarter to Japanese if at their mercy. The only swimmers who survived were a party who managed to reach one

of the small islands in the Gulf of Imari, where there was no garrison; but as these were subsequently captured and carried off to slavery, their fate was probably little better than that of those who perished. Apparently their lives were spared because they were southern Chinese serving under compulsion, and not Mongols from the north.

The ancient versions give a mass of unconnected detail as to the actual form of shipwreck suffered by the fleets, which it is not always easy to follow as a general account; but it would seem that the fate which overtook the ships in Imari Gulf was practically identical in nearly all cases. Finding the harbour a trap with the wind in the north, they made desperate efforts to get outside when their cables parted, but a strong tide added to their difficulties, and in the end the whole 3,000, or thereabouts, were driven on to the rocks and cliffs along the eastern shores of the gulf and dashed to pieces. So great was the mass of wreckage, that it is said that at one point it formed a "jamb" between an island in the gulf and the shore, across which a man could walk the whole way out after the storm on shattered hulls, planks, and spars. That this is quite conceivable will be admitted by those who saw the wall of wreckage on the eastern side of Hong-Kong Harbour, to the north of the Ly-ee-moon Pass, after the typhoon of 1906. The fleet at the Hakozaki anchorage suffered nearly, but not quite, so complete a disaster. A large number were blown on to the shoals at the eastern end of the bay and demolished in the breakers, and the remainder, to escape a like fate, struggled out to sea, where hundreds more foundered in the open. A mere remnant succeeded in weathering the storm in the end and regaining Korea, in an utterly demoralized condition. But whatever fate may have overtaken individual vessels, it is at least certain that when in a few hours the typhoon had passed, some 4,000 of Kublai's ships had been lost in one way or another, and of the men they had carried about 130,000 had perished by the sea or by the sword. If the Japanese themselves had been gifted for the time with the control

of the elements, they could scarcely have overwhelmed their adversaries more completely, and it is but natural that many devout Japanese should believe to this day that the priests were right in claiming that celestial aid came to the assistance of their country in response to their appeals. The losses of the Spanish Armada were not nearly so overwhelming, and if Philip II. ever heard of the experiences of Kublai Khan, he must have known that there was at least one monarch in history whose fortune was even worse than his own when he essayed the conquest of an island State.

In this fashion ended the only serious attempt ever made by an alien ruler to subjugate Japan. Some authorities have written as if the typhoon had been her salvation, but that is not strictly correct. Thanks to the stubborn resistance of the defending armies, the invasion was already on the road to failure when the typhoon occurred; and the forces of Nature merely hastened the discomfiture of the invaders which the Japanese had begun, and brought it to a more tragic ending than it might otherwise have suffered. But the successful resistance of the Japanese was only possible because the physical barrier of the sea imposed such limitations upon Kublai's efforts, that the force of his blow could be withstood by a valiant race. Had Japan been a continental State, not all the bravery of her sons would have availed to maintain their freedom, for Kublai could have poured ten times their numbers across their frontiers, and their fate must have been similar to that suffered at his hands by all the mainland nations of the Far East.

It is said that even the dismal failure of the second expedition did not discourage the spirit of this indomitable man, and that he immediately gave orders for the preparation of a third. But the experiences of the first two had left such an impression among his men, that the troops intended for the third deserted as fast as they were assembled, and his death put an end to the project in its early stages, which his successors never revived. We read in history of Napoleon's grenadiers on the beach

of Boulogne, staring at the distant cliffs of Kent and Sussex, on which they were never destined to form up. The Mongol conquerors on the seaboard of China were not subjected to the tantalizing experience of having the object of their ambitions actually before their eyes in this way, but they knew, nevertheless, that a fertile and desirable land lay across the restless waters of the Straits of Tsushima, and had to learn that it must remain for ever beyond their reach. Nearly six centuries were to pass before any Japanese again fell on their own soil by the act of a foreign enemy. And if its true significance is grasped, it will be recognized as a very noteworthy circumstance that, although these first attacks on Japan were launched from Far Eastern Asia, the next were carried out by forces from Far Western Europe—a circumstance which was only rendered possible by the extraordinary advance of naval architecture in the interval; for whereas the Mongols could only cross a narrow strait with some difficulty and much risk, the European frigates whose guns came into action against the defences of Kagosima and Shimonoseki 580 years afterwards had traversed 14,000 miles of the ocean with confidence and ease.

## CHAPTER II

### THE KOREAN WAR OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

FOR more than three centuries after the disastrous ending of the Mongol invasion Japan was externally at peace, and when next her forces were engaged with a foreign enemy, hostilities were of her own making, and the theatres of operations were on foreign soil and the high seas. But this interval was nevertheless a period of some consequence in the history of Japanese relationships with the rest of the world, even though not marked by any incidents of naval or military importance, except as regards the frequent civil wars, which do not form any proper part of the subject of these pages. Among other events, it brought the Japanese into touch for the first time with Europeans, for it was somewhere about the year 1540 that certain Portuguese traders found their way to the dominions of the Mikado, under circumstances which are sometimes attributed to an accident. The arrival of these adventurers was followed by that of Roman Catholic missionaries, and although the subject of religious propaganda does not come within the scope of this work, unless it has a bearing on maritime affairs, the introduction of Christianity into Japan had such important consequences at a later period, that it did affect maritime affairs in common with everything else, and cannot pass without mention here. When the Japanese authorities discovered the advantages of commercial intercourse with the Portuguese, the latter received every encouragement to extend their business, and, as it was evident that the Roman Catholic priests exercised a considerable influence over the traders, these priests were at first allowed to preach their religion without hindrance, and made converts in large numbers.

Great changes had passed over the continent of Asia in this same period. The empire of Jenghiz and Kublai had fallen to pieces, and the Mongols, after their period of brief but very extensive domination, had reverted to their original status of desert tribesmen, regretted by none. China was again a separate monarchy, but under the Ming dynasty, which maintained no diplomatic relations with Japan. Korea, now free from Mongol tyranny, was virtually an independent kingdom once more, and kept up a friendly official intercourse with the Japanese. But the Koreans were nominally vassals of China, paying as such a small annual tribute, and the Chinese Government were jealous and mistrustful of Korean relationships with Japan.

The Japanese form of government had become very complicated, and its curious structure must be understood in its main points for a proper appreciation of subsequent events. It has been observed in the introductory chapter to this book that the Emperor, or Mikado, possessed no actual power, and that the *de facto* rulers of Japan were dictators, who rose to supremacy in civil war. But this subversion of authority did not take place in the very early stages of Japanese history, for during that period the Emperors had been the actual as well as the legitimate rulers. Among the high offices of State at their disposal, however, was that of "Shogun," or Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces, and in the course of time the Shoguns usurped the whole functions of government, civil and military, internal and external, until the sole prestige attaching to the person of the Mikado was his direct descent from a traditional celestial ancestry always officially acknowledged. He was still nominally the only source of legitimate authority, but so entirely had the substance become a shadow, that instead of the Mikado selecting the Shogun, it was often the Shogun who selected the Mikado, subject only to the condition that his choice was made from among the numerous male progeny of the Imperial house. In dealing with matters of foreign policy, the Shogun's power was so absolute and un-

questioned, that foreign potentates sent their embassies or missions to his Court instead of the Mikado's, and referred to the Japanese people as his subjects. His crest was emblazoned on the war-flag of the Empire; he raised armies and fleets as he pleased by taxing the whole land at his unfettered discretion; he lived in a capital city of his own; and, although nominally responsible to the Mikado for all his actions, was in point of fact accountable to nobody, provided he did nothing violently contrary to the interests of his own supporters and clan. So completely did the position of the Shogun become an accepted principle in the unwritten Constitution of Japan, that during certain periods of history the Shogunate remained hereditary in the same family for several generations. And a further complication arose from the strictly observed law that the holder of the title must be of noble ancestry. Hence, when, as occasionally happened, a man of humble origin rose to supreme power by virtue of special distinction as a leader in the clan wars, he could not adopt the title of Shogun, although he exercised all his functions. In such cases he usually appointed a puppet Shogun, from whom he nominally received orders, who was in turn supposed to derive all authority from a puppet Mikado, although neither had any power whatever.

It was a man of this kind, Hideyoshi by name, who became one of the foremost statesmen in Japanese history, and the moving spirit in the events which led to the great foreign war of Japan in the sixteenth century. As a country lad accustomed to horses he first found employment in the Shogun's stables, and subsequently accompanying his master in the civil wars, displayed such remarkable military talents, that he rose to be one of the Shogun's principal generals, and on the death of the latter succeeded to his position, although his birth prevented him from adopting the title. Hideyoshi had great ambition as well as political genius, and, from a succession of sayings with which he has been credited, it would seem that he cherished an aspiration to conquer all China from an early stage in his career; although, as he was

quite uneducated, it is doubtful whether he had more than a vague notion of the vast extent of that country. While still serving under his predecessor in power, he first disclosed this purpose by asking the latter to grant him the revenues of Kiushiu for one year to enable him to build ships for a conquest of Korea. With the assistance of the Koreans he would then, he said, proceed to conquer China "as easily as a man rolls up a mat." But his master was not disposed to countenance such a project, and Hideyoshi could take no steps in the matter till he came to power himself in the year 1582. Even then the unsettled state of affairs in his own country occupied all his attention for about four more years, and it was not till 1586 that he began his preparations in earnest by ordering the building of 2,000 ships. It was at this early stage in his plans that an incident occurred which suggests that he had some intuition of the importance of ensuring that no serious threat could be made against his sea line of communications before embarking on an enterprise which involved crossing the water. He sent for two Portuguese Jesuit priests, whom he knew to be men of influence with their own people, and with whom he was on very friendly terms, and to them he explained his scheme at length, intimating his intention to leave his brother in charge of Japan, and immortalize his own name by subjugating China and Korea, even if he met with his death in the enterprise. He professed a resolve to extend liberal treatment to the vanquished peoples, and promised the priests that they might build churches all over China if he succeeded. Then the object underlying this handsome appeal to their religious enthusiasm was made apparent by a request that they would exert all their influence with the Portuguese authorities to obtain on his behalf the temporary loan of two Portuguese heavily armed ships, with their officers and crews, for which he offered to pay liberally.

Very unfortunately for Hideyoshi, this proposal led to no results, for his own ships were unprovided with guns, and were about to take part in a whole series of naval



engagements of decisive importance, and to encounter opposition in a totally unexpected form, against which nothing but artillery armaments would have been of any use. His failure in these negotiations with the Portuguese was destined to cause, in the end, the failure of his whole grandiose project, and the influence of the sea on Japanese history was about to be manifested in a new and unfavourable light. But nothing existed in the past annals of his country to warn him of the risk of conducting oversea warfare without first establishing a naval superiority over the enemy. Japan had never embarked on a foreign enterprise of importance within the period of her authentic history, and the only attack ever directed against her own shores had been Kublai Khan's invasion, in which the Mongols' naval power had been so overwhelming, that they were never opposed on the sea at all, and no fighting took place on that element to furnish an object-lesson. Hideyoshi was evidently uneasy on this point, as we have seen, but his apprehensions were solely the outcome of his strategic instinct, and, as there was nothing in the way of historical experience to confirm them, he seems to have cast his doubts aside, refusing to let the failure to get the Portuguese vessels put a stop to the prosecution of his schemes.

Having started his preparations in the way of raising troops and building ships, he had to find some pretext for fastening a quarrel on Korea, unless he could obtain any kind of guarantee of Korean neutrality or assistance in his prospective invasion of China, of which he was evidently doubtful. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries complimentary missions had passed frequently between the Korean and Japanese Governments, and under the friendly relationships thus prevailing, permission had been granted for a party of Japanese farmers to settle in Korea. But these immigrants ultimately caused so much trouble, that they were sent back, and early in the sixteenth century the custom of exchanging diplomatic envoys fell into abeyance. This cessation of courtesies had lasted for a long period in Hideyoshi's time, but it

answered his purposes as a pretext for an attitude of injured dignity, and he despatched a somewhat peremptory note to the King of Korea accordingly, demanding that the former reciprocal exchange of envoys should be resumed. The King was disinclined to renew this expensive custom, which had never been approved of in Pekin, and Hideyoshi, not satisfied that his own envoy had been sufficiently zealous in pressing the point, beheaded him on his return to Japan with a negative answer; thus affording yet another example of the risks of a diplomatic career among Oriental nations in the Middle Ages, for if an ambassador was too aggressive he was apt to be executed by the potentate to whom he was accredited, but if he was not aggressive enough he ran a chance of a similar fate at the hands of his own master. Next year Hideyoshi sent another mission of two envoys to reiterate his demand, and these were instructed not to return until they had obtained the King's agreement to the proposal, in which they were eventually successful, but not until after two whole years of importunity and argument. A Korean diplomatic mission was accordingly sent to Japan, but Hideyoshi's vanity had been so much ruffled by the delay, that, having gained his point, he now kept the Korean envoys waiting in his turn for a year more, and after treating them most unceremoniously, sent them back with a letter to their King, informing him of his plans. It was not till 1591, therefore, or nearly four years after the King received his first request from Hideyoshi to resume the custom of exchanging missions, that he received a plain intimation of the latter's intention to attack China, and with it a request for Korean assistance, upon which Hideyoshi said his future friendship with Korea would depend. Meanwhile Hideyoshi's preparations for the despatch of a first army of 200,000 men were nearing completion.

The returning Koreans were accompanied by the two Japanese envoys, and these latter were instructed to make it public that Hideyoshi's reason for attacking China was because the latter had refused to receive a

Japanese embassy—which was at best a mere excuse—and that if the Koreans remained neutral, and did not obstruct the Japanese troops who would be sent through their country to invade China, they would be unmolested. Hideyoshi's attitude towards Korea was, in fact, very similar to the German attitude towards Belgium in 1914; and, like the King of the Belgians, the King of Korea flatly refused to agree to any such proposal, pointing out the friendly relations existing between his own country and China, and the hopelessness of the whole project, which he likened to a bee stinging a tortoise. He kept the Chinese Government fully informed of Hideyoshi's intentions at the same time.

It is difficult to estimate whether this rebuff was a disappointment to Hideyoshi or played into his hand. The refusal of the Koreans to take any part in a war against China made it clear that he could only get through Korea by force, if he persisted in sending his troops by that route—which in itself was quite unnecessary—and it was certainly not to his advantage to provoke Korean hostility at a time when he was about to engage another and a formidable adversary, for the Chinese of that period had a well-trained and excellently equipped army. But the view has been taken by some writers that he felt confident of being able to conquer Korea, even if he failed in China, and hoped thereby to gain some celebrity at least. Others have suggested that his principal object throughout had been to keep the peace among his restive subjects at home by providing a foreign outlet for their energies without much caring in what direction, and Korea lay nearest at hand. It is true that he had talked of conquering China for years, but could reach the Chinese coast without going through Korea at all. The only advantages to be gained by forcing the Koreans into the war might be an addition to his forces of a certain number of compulsorily raised and doubtfully useful levies, or the possibility of making Korea an advanced source of food-supplies for the army invading China, as Kublai had done in his preparations for invading Japan. But Hideyoshi never

seems to have openly announced that as a reason for his subsequent actions. When all is considered, it may perhaps be near the truth to suspect that his early ambition of conquering China had weakened with the passage of time and the increased knowledge it brings; but that he still hoped to inflict a blow of some sort as a reprisal for the consistently unfriendly attitude of the Chinese, and knew that, even if his armies never succeeded in reaching their territory, he would greatly irritate the Chinese Government by an armed occupation of their vassal State. If the Koreans raised no difficulties, so much the better; but if they did, he felt able to enforce his purpose on them.

While these four years of diplomatic controversy had been dragging their length, a Japanese army of 300,000 men had been raised, trained, and equipped. Of these, two-thirds were detailed as an expeditionary force for Korea, and the remaining third as a reserve. The plan of campaign was to land in Southern Korea and fight a way through to the Chinese frontier on the north. The reserves were to be sent up the west coast of Korea by sea to reinforce the army first landed when that stage had been reached. A portion of the whole were then to remain to guard the land line of communications, while the rest crossed the frontier and marched on into Chinese Manchuria. As a general scheme of operations this plan would have been sound enough, provided the position at sea was secure. But in the absence of any established maritime superiority it was a risky proceeding to despatch an army across even the comparatively narrow Straits of Tsushima, and it was simply inviting disaster to propose sending large reinforcements all the way by water up the Western Korean coast.

At the last moment Hideyoshi's health kept him from taking personal command, and the enterprise started without him. The leading divisions were embarked towards the end of May, 1592, and crossing without interference, landed at Fusan, a port near the southern extremity of Korea, on the 24th of that month, being followed in rapid

succession by the remainder. The initial operations were brilliantly successful, and the Japanese swept through the enemy's country like a tidal wave, carrying everything before them. Neither fortified towns nor mountain passes nor deep rivers checked their impetuous advance for a single day; and scattering the hostile armies in every direction, their leading troops covered the 200 miles to Seoul—the Korean capital—in less than three weeks from the date of disembarking at Fusan. Their van was led by the brave and capable Konishi, who, although only a subordinate general, became the most distinguished of the Japanese officers as the war proceeded, and deserves special mention as sharing with Blake, Rupert, and a very few others, the rare merit of having commanded both fleets and armies with equal success. Like the others, he began as a soldier, and then took to the sea. Before the Japanese had arrived at Seoul the King had already fled northwards; in which direction, after a few days' halt to rest the troops, Konishi continued his advance. By July 15 he had reached the important town of Peng-yang on the Taidong River, near the west coast, and only seventy miles short of the Chinese frontier, where the reserves from Japan were intended to join up with him, after making the sea passage to the river entrance.

But while the invaders were winning victory after victory on the land, they were suffering disaster after disaster at sea. On that element the Koreans were at home, and Fate had ordained that this obscure and generally undistinguished race were to produce at this crisis a man, Admiral Yi-sun, whose achievements entitle him to a place in the very front rank of great naval commanders, although his name is scarcely known to the historians of the West. With a wide grasp of a strategic situation and remarkable skill as a naval tactician, Yi-sun combined a spirit of leadership always animated by the principle of the uncompromising offensive, the only true spirit of war. His mere presence in any engagement seemed always sufficient to ensure victory, but his headlong attacks were never mere blind adventures, for he resembled

Nelson in omitting no precautions to secure success, although he never hesitated to strike hard when the occasion arose. Moreover, in addition to his other gifts, he possessed an unusual talent for mechanical invention, which placed him far ahead of all his Eastern contemporaries as a naval architect, and contributed materially to his successes in war. In this, as in many other points of his character, he much resembled the celebrated Cochrane, although it was his fortune to work on a vastly wider scale. And, like the latter, he does not seem to have understood the art of remaining in favour in high places.

In the sixteenth century, although firearms and even artillery were known on land in the East as well as the West, no Asiatic nation had as yet equipped a ship with guns, and neither the Japanese nor the Koreans were exceptions to this general rule. Their fighting ships only differed from their traders—when they differed at all—in having more oars and a better design for speed and handiness in manœuvring. The principal method of attack was by boarding, and if for any reason that was not possible, an archery or matchlock action took place, in which the targets were the hostile crew and not the ship. A third, and often successful, form of engaging was effected by setting the enemy's ship alight by the use of fire-arrows. During the four years of diplomatic wrangling which preceded the war, Yi-sun's inventive faculties had been at work to produce a vessel which should be able to resist all three methods of attack, while losing nothing in her own powers of offence, and he succeeded beyond measure. Beginning with a hull design, adapted for very high speed and handiness in manœuvring, he covered this by an iron-plated turtleback deck impervious to fire, arrows, or bullets; along the top of which were fixed a number of sharp upright spikes, thus making the ship equally proof against boarders. For offensive purposes he strengthened her stem as a ram, and constructed archery ports ahead, abeam, and astern. The vessel was in fact the *Dreadnought* of her day in the East,

and her memory still forms a subject of Korean national song. It is possible that Hideyoshi had received some intelligence about this remarkable craft which was the cause of his effort to obtain the two Portuguese ships; but, if so, he must have kept it secret from his own men, for her first appearance among the Japanese was evidently quite as much a surprise as the appearance of the *Merrimac* was to the *Congress* and *Cumberland* in the American Civil War.

On the outbreak of war Yi-sun was stationed with a squadron on the west coast of Korea, and the defence of the southern harbours, for which the Japanese made, was entrusted to another admiral. But the latter was a poltroon, who offered no effective opposition to the enemy, and contented himself with appealing to Yi-sun for help. Yi-sun required no second invitation, and, with or without the sanction of higher authority, left his special area of limited responsibility to hasten in search of the Japanese fleet. The exact whereabouts and disposition of the latter is not on record, but the events of the next few days give some general indication of it. From these it would seem that the main body was cruising somewhere near the northern end of the main line of sea communications, not far from the Korean coast, with two look-out squadrons to the westward; of which the outermost and strongest was stationed at the island of Okpo about thirty miles distant, and the second and smaller at the island of Noryang, about half as far, either as a connecting-link or a reinforcement in either direction. A certain number of other vessels were employed on convoy escort.

Very disastrous was the fate of all these forces. Before the war was ten days old, and while the Japanese were in the very midst of their victorious advance on the land, Yi-sun had come round the south-west point of Korea, and was approaching the Japanese fleets in a manner which reminds the reader of Nelson's approach to the French before the Battle of the Nile, as described in the pages of Mahan. And, like the French, the Japanese had at the time no suspicion of the character of the man whose

terrific blows they were about to feel. That ignorance did not last long, and his first victims were the outlying ships anchored off Okpo. These he sighted early on a June morning, about a fortnight after the first Japanese troops had landed, and, with a strong fair wind, he sailed right into them. No records exist, unfortunately, as to his battle formation, but it seems evident, from the old Korean accounts, that he took the lead himself in his invulnerable *Dreadnought*, which charged through the enemy's fleet unharmed herself, but dealing out destruction on every side. His example so inspired his other ships that they attacked with equal determination and skill, and although the Japanese displayed all their usual courage, they fought in vain. The Koreans manoeuvred to prevent boarding, and, relying on their fire-arrows, soon had twenty-six Japanese vessels in a blaze. The remainder, to save themselves, cut their cables, made sail, and scattered, but were hotly pursued with further losses. Yi-sun had too much important work still before him, however, to be in a position as yet to disperse his fleet in a general chase, in consequence of which several of the ships of this squadron effected their escape. It was otherwise with the units that received his subsequent attention. Pressing eastwards before a fair wind, he fell in with the smaller outlying squadron off Noryang the same afternoon, which he attacked in the same fashion, and annihilated to the very last vessel before dark. Having completed this, he continued to steer eastward all night, with the result that by the morning he had reached the Japanese main line of communications, and there he encountered what seems to have been the Japanese Grand Fleet, or at least the main portion of their navy. Detailed accounts of the great battle that followed do not exist; but the results are authentically recorded. Quite undeterred by the strength of the enemy, Yi-sun went at them as if with a sledge-hammer, and again proved invincible. The action raged all day, but although the Japanese fought with desperate courage, fortune never wavered from the Korean side, and the whole Japanese fleet was sunk



burnt, or captured; while their gallant admiral, having done his best for the honour of his country, preserved the honour of his own name in his countrymen's eyes by committing suicide in the approved fashion for a *Samurai* who has suffered defeat.

Yi-sun now dominated the maritime situation without fear of a rival, which, under the strategic circumstances of the case, was practically tantamount to saying that he dominated the situation on the land as well. He had destroyed the enemy's fleet and placed himself effectively astride of the main line of communications of the enemy's army, occupying a position analogous to that of Nelson after the Nile, which is one of the highest points of success to which an admiral can attain. He now proceeded to reap the fruits. Rightly anticipating that he would not have long to wait, he remained on the scene of his latest victory for the time, and a very few days later had the satisfaction of sighting a large convoy approaching from the southward, laden with important supplies for the forces in Korea, quite unaware of the danger ahead, and only escorted by twenty-five fighting craft. Chase was given at once; the escort was easily overpowered, and although the transports scattered, they all fell a prey to the faster Korean ships, not one escaping. This was the first direct misfortune to the army in the field resulting from the defeat of their comrades afloat, but far worse were to follow.

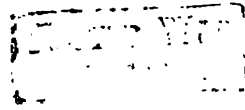
Many commanders, of not altogether inferior judgment, might have decided to remain where they were, if in Yi-sun's position, satisfied with the brilliant successes to their credit and hoping for the luck of further captures on a larger scale. But not so Yi-sun, who was never satisfied that he had done enough, if we may judge by his actions, and whose outlook was certainly never confined to one point of the compass. It swept the whole horizon, and he seems to have anticipated that more convoys were not likely to travel by the main route for the time at least. Like Nelson off Toulon, he had to keep a watch in two directions at once to make sure of countering the enemy's

movements, for there was always the possibility that, in his absence from his own original station on the west coast, Japanese supplies to the land theatre of war might pass that way without his knowledge. This passage was in point of fact—as explained on a previous page—the route selected in the original plan of campaign for the main body of reserves intended to join the army in Korea before the march into China began. It may be doubted whether Yi-sun knew anything of that, but he decided, nevertheless, to linger no more on the eastern main route after his great haul, and slipped away unobserved to the westward, to a watching station off the south-western islands of Korea, from which he could move quickly in either direction, and which islands he felt sure would be sighted for navigational reasons by any vessels taking the western route. Events fully demonstrated the soundness of his judgment, and no strategic move of importance was ever better timed.

The northern advance of the Japanese armies had been so rapid, that the reserves intended to join by the western route had been embarked, in part at least, by the end of June. There is nothing to indicate whether by that time Hideyoshi was aware of the Korean successes at sea or not, but he made the fatal blunder of adhering to his original scheme; and a fleet of many hundred transports, escorted by the majority of the fighting ships still remaining to Japan, sailed early in July by the western passage. As Yi-sun had expected, they shaped course so as to sight the islands off the south-west coast of Korea, and thus steered right into the trap he had laid for them. At dawn on July 9 the convoy came in sight of the Korean fleet, but at a great distance off, and the Korean admiral, apparently afraid that the enemy might escape, abandoned his usual plan of direct attack, and resorted to the stratagem of feinting a retreat himself under oars. The ruse succeeded perfectly, and the Japanese admiral, in haste to capture a supposed flying enemy, gave general chase with all his fighting ships. Yi-sun, taking care not to retreat too fast, led them on till they were well

strung out, and the faster vessels, with which he might otherwise have experienced some difficulty in closing, were drawing near. Then, being under sweeps, at the critical moment his ships suddenly altered course sixteen points together and fell on the leading chasers, a manoeuvre which may seem simple enough on paper to the unprofessional mind, but which only a naval officer can properly appreciate as a test of a well-trained fleet.

The Koreans began their attack this time by ramming, and once again Yi-sun led in his battle-proof flagship, with which he smashed his way irresistibly through the Japanese fleet. His other vessels did the same, and the leading ships of the enemy were overpowered and sunk before their consorts could come up to their support. It is probable that many were caught in the act of turning, with their broadsides exposed to the stems of the advancing Koreans. Those that escaped immediate disaster were driven back on to the main body of the convoy, and the whole retreated eastward in a disorganized crowd, into which Yi-sun's ships discharged fire-arrows with murderous effect. During the running fight seventy Japanese fighting ships had been sunk or otherwise destroyed, when a large reinforcement was sighted coming down from ahead. As the two bodies were steering towards each other, they closed very quickly, and the Japanese admirals made a determined attempt to stem the retreat with the new arrivals. But in the effort they lost some fifty more vessels by ramming or fire, and then, for the first and only time when engaged with a foreign enemy, even the Japanese lost courage, and refusing in despair to fight against an apparently unconquerable foe, gave way in all directions and became a prey to utter demoralization. The retreat degenerated into a rout, in which transports and escorts, sinking ships and burning ships, were all mixed together; and so complete did the panic become, that in the end the great majority of those that escaped destruction in other ways made for the coast, rather than suffer the fates of their consorts, where they were driven ashore in scores and wrecked with great loss of life. As



regards its *matériel*, at least, the convoy was practically annihilated, and all prospects of a Japanese invasion of China was brought abruptly to an end.

This was the great Korean admiral's crowning exploit. In the short space of six weeks he had achieved a series of successes unsurpassed in the whole annals of maritime war, destroying the enemy's battle-fleets, cutting his lines of communication, sweeping up his convoys, imperilling the situation of his victorious armies in the field, and bringing his most ambitious schemes to utter ruin. Not even Nelson, Blake, or Jean Bart could have done more than this scarcely known representative of a small and often cruelly oppressed nation; and it is to be regretted that his memory lingers nowhere outside his native land, for no impartial judge could deny him the right to be accounted among the born leaders of men.

While this latest and most crushing defeat had befallen the Japanese arms at sea, Konishi with his army was waiting at Peng-yang for the expected reinforcements to commence the invasion of China. He was not strong enough to move without them, and when in due course he learnt that they would never arrive, he knew that all the Japanese plans had miscarried and the farthest point of advance had been reached. But the Japanese forces had been well spread over Korea, and for the time their hold was strong enough for them to retain their position in all parts and await orders. All through the autumn they waited thus, but day by day their situation became more precarious, for not only were supplies running low in the absence of any communication with Japan, but the Chinese were profiting by the respite to concentrate a very strong and well-equipped army on the frontier. In the depth of winter this army assumed the counter-offensive, and by virtue of superior numbers drove Konishi out of Peng-yang, with the result that all the Japanese forces had to fall back southward on Seoul. This was the beginning of a land retreat consequent upon defeat at sea. The Chinese followed up the retirement, and the Koreans, heartened by Yi-sun's great exploits, waged a persistent

guerrilla warfare which taxed all the efforts of the starving Japanese troops to resist. They made a stand at Seoul and repulsed a vigorous effort on the part of the Chinese to drive them out, but matters went from bad to worse owing to the stoppage of food-supplies, and by the end of the winter their position had become so desperate that they were compelled to ask for terms of peace. Upon the receipt of this request the Chinese and Koreans agreed to desist from further attacks if the Japanese would withdraw from Korea altogether. The Commander-in-Chief of the invading army had no option but to accept these terms, although he knew that it would be difficult to persuade Hideyoshi that this was so; and exactly a year from the date of their first landing in Korea the Japanese marched out of Seoul southwards for their ports of embarkation, undefeated in arms and unbroken in spirit, but physically weakened by hunger and incapable of undertaking further operations of war. Their impotence had been brought about by the operation of an agency on which they had never even set their eyes.

This should properly have ended hostilities altogether, and the Chinese Commander-in-Chief evidently believed that it had, for he on his part at once marched northwards to return to his own country, leaving the Koreans to take care of themselves, although the enemy's troops were not yet embarked for Japan. But in the meantime Hideyoshi had no intention of abiding by terms of peace which were equivalent to an acknowledgment that he had failed not only to conquer China, but even to effect a permanent conquest of Korea. Orders were therefore sent by him that the Japanese army, instead of embarking, were to seize and hold a number of strong natural positions on the coast, each on a cape or promontory easily defended on the land side, and there to form entrenched camps. Among the Japanese generals Konishi was much against this half-and-half policy—which was neither making proper war on Korea nor evacuating it—and strongly urged a complete withdrawal. But although the ablest of the Japanese soldiers, he was not the Commander-in-

Chief, and his views did not suit the ambitious vanity of Hideyoshi. Konishi's sound and disinterested advice nearly cost him his head, and, under definite instructions from Japan, strong garrisons were left at selected points along the south coast of Korea, although the majority of the war-worn troops were embarked for home.

Such an attitude on the part of the Japanese would, of course, have been impossible if the Koreans had chosen to make use of their overwhelming superiority at sea to cut off the supplies of these garrisons, which Yi-sun would have done without doubt if free to act. But the Koreans were at this stage guilty of a piece of supreme folly which played straight into Hideyoshi's hands, and doubtless strengthened his purpose. Yi-sun's great successes had aroused the jealousy of a faction with strong influence at Court, and these people, by means of a particularly disgraceful intrigue, obtained his supersession from the King in favour of one of themselves, an utterly worthless and incompetent officer, who lived a corrupt and intemperate life, and was hated by the men. This admiral was content to enjoy the emoluments of his command without undertaking the responsibilities, and, as he never went to sea, the fleet under his orders fell into a condition of utter inefficiency and disrepair. He was perfectly ready to accept the nominal cessation of hostilities, following on the Japanese evacuation of Seoul, as an excuse for inaction, and the enemy's garrisons remaining on the coast in defiance of the terms of peace had nothing to fear with such a man in command afloat. Hideyoshi's great object now was to gain time enough to rebuild the Japanese navy and raise a fresh army before the protests certain to arise in China and Korea against the maintenance of these armed posts developed into measures for forcible ejection. Diplomatic proceedings, if sufficiently prolonged, might answer this purpose, and in regard to these he was a past master at inventing plausible causes for delay. In consequence, when certain Chinese envoys arrived at his capital to arrange terms for a permanent peace, including the withdrawal of these garrisons, he

kept them waiting for many months on various pretexts and then sent them back with an entirely fresh set of proposals which he knew would be unacceptable. This led to an endless exchange of diplomatic correspondence, exactly as he had intended, in which missions came and went in true Oriental fashion, with constant protests from one side and constant evasions and excuses from the other. In this way he successfully dragged out the negotiations for three whole years, while the Japanese shipwrights were building a new fleet as fast as they could hammer the planks together, a new field-army was being raised and equipped, and large depots of food were being quietly accumulated at the entrenched camps. And all this time the Korean war-junks were lying rotting at their anchors, or in use as traders, with their fighting crews discharged, and Yi-sun fretting out his soul in oblivion and retirement.

In 1596, after three years of diplomatic controversy and armed peace, Hideyoshi was ready to begin all over again, and had, in fact, already passed a force of about 100,000 men surreptitiously across the water. He also received Konishi back to favour, and being a shrewd judge of men, appointed him to the chief command of the new Japanese fleet, all the former admirals having been killed. Then he suddenly assumed an aggressive attitude by affecting great indignation at the latest Chinese diplomatic communication, on the grounds that it assumed the submission of Japan, and stated in his reply that he intended to punish the Koreans for impeding good relations between his own country and China—a claim without any justification whatever.

But he made a second capital mistake in his calculations. His first had been the assumption that even if he encountered some trouble on the sea—which he evidently did expect—he need not fear a fatal interference with his schemes. The consequences of that error had been too palpable for even the most obtuse of strategists to miss, and he took every precaution against its repetition. Now, however, he completely underestimated the strength of

the probable opposition on the land by failing to appreciate that the comparative ease with which the original invading army had overrun Korea was partly due to the inefficient military organization of the enemy and the dilatoriness of the Chinese in coming to their help. He looked forward, therefore, with confidence to a second easy occupation of that country, secure against undoing by sea. But the Chinese Government had learnt their lesson also. They realized that they had made an initial mistake in not hastening to Korea's assistance at the very beginning of the war, and a second mistake in allowing the Chinese army to withdraw without seeing the Japanese fairly out of the country. Being suspicious of Hideyoshi's intentions all through the long period of suspended hostilities, they took the opportunity to pour troops into Korea until the whole country was filled, and every city, pass, and ford strongly held and scientifically fortified.

Hideyoshi resumed hostilities in the summer of 1596 by despatching the new Japanese army, escorted by the new Japanese fleet under Konishi, whom the incompetent Korean admiral received peremptory orders to attack. He was obliged to obey, but by his previous negligence the Korean fleet had fallen into such a state of inefficiency that it was no longer formidable, and in the battle which ensued—the fifth sea-fight of the war—Konishi completely turned the tables by scoring the first great naval victory against a foreign enemy in Japanese history. The Koreans were overwhelmingly defeated and nearly all their ships destroyed. Their unworthy admiral saved his life in the fight, and by influence at Court saved his head afterwards, but was severely flogged by his own people. The Japanese had now no serious anxiety about their sea communications, and, although Konishi had not been opposed by a very formidable adversary in the battle, he is at least entitled to the credit of having done everything that was immediately required.

But when the land operations began a different tale was developed. The new army encountered stubborn



opposition in superior numbers in every step in its advance, and the Japanese forward movement was so slow, that after six months of constant fighting they had progressed no farther than a point which they had reached in a fortnight in the first invasion. They were still far from Seoul when brought to a final stand in a pitched battle with the main Chinese army, and the Japanese leaders were forced to recognize that this second attempt to subdue Korea was doomed to end like the first. For a time they were undecided whether to maintain their position, or to accept the inevitable and begin a retirement, for their losses had been heavy, and although their communications were secure and their supplies ample, even Japanese troops get worn out with incessant fighting sooner or later. But Hideyoshi was still paramount in Japan, and the army commanders knew that it would be hopeless to obtain his approval to abandon the war so long as the enemy refrained from the offensive. How long this state of deadlock would have lasted it is impossible to say had not a new and unexpected factor of great portent suddenly arisen. Yi-sun was once again at sea. The Korean King, after treating the national hero with the basest ingratitude, had turned to him for help, and the great admiral, always ready to come forward in his country's cause, had accepted the command afloat for a second time, although scarcely any ships were left to take under his orders since Konishi's defeat of the Korean fleet under Yi-sun's predecessor. Moreover, for some reason of which we know nothing his own former armoured flagship seems to have disappeared; although there are indications which suggest that this was due to shipwreck, and not to destruction in action, for the place where her bones were reported to lie was pointed out by Korean traditions as late at least as the nineteenth century. Yi-sun collected what remained of the Korean fleet, however, reinforced by a squadron of Chinese, and it is remarkable testimony to the respect in which his name was held that this squadron was ordered to follow his instructions, for on all other occasions of co-

operation with the Koreans the Chinese insisted on taking the supreme command. After assembling this mixed force on the west coast he sailed southward, towards the cruising area of the main Japanese fleet, and was very soon again engaged. Konishi had detached a squadron to the westward to assist the army on that side, unaware of Yi-sun's movements, which fell in with the latter—coming from the opposite direction—off the south-western islands, near the scene of his great victory of four years before. For the fifth time the presence of the great Korean was a guarantee of success to his country's arms, and the Japanese again suffered complete and disastrous defeat. News of this fresh reverse at sea had an immediate effect on the councils of the Japanese army commanders, for although it was only a detached squadron which had suffered, and the main Japanese fleet under Konishi himself was still intact, past experiences of the results of defeat at sea had made them very cautious about taking any further risks. Hesitation came to an end at once by an order to all the Japanese land forces, extended in various directions, to abandon the offensive and fall back on the line of entrenched positions along the southern coast. It was then late in the year 1596.

Here they remained all the winter, closely and constantly harassed and threatened on the land side, but free from investment by sea, because, although Yi-sun had defeated a detached squadron, his own was too weak in numbers to attempt decisive conclusions with the main Japanese fleet, even under such a leader as himself. By avoiding the forlorn hope of an attack, nevertheless, he remained a permanent menace on the Japanese sea flank, which kept Konishi perpetually apprehensive. It would no doubt have been the proper policy for the latter to have moved westward and forced Yi-sun to engage. But, perhaps because his training as a soldier gave his mind a bias towards land operations, he devoted his whole attention instead towards supporting and assisting the harassed troops on shore, in regard to which he displayed the greatest activity. His failure to understand the proper

use of the offensive at sea was a very common one at the time, and not unnatural in a man who only took to sea service late in life, although it was not shared by the more distinguished of the European sea-soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But it was the only fault in his brilliant record.

Matters remained in this indecisive condition until well into the summer of 1597, and the Japanese maintained themselves in a situation from which they had nothing to gain—and which threw a severe strain on the *morale* of their troops—simply because Hideyoshi refused to admit that he was beaten. But his immense industry coupled with a licentious private life had worn out his vitality, and his days were drawing to a close, although he was not an old man. By the autumn the position in Korea was so bad that the Japanese commander in the field was on the point of asking the enemy for an armistice, when news was received at his headquarters of Hideyoshi's death, and his successor in the office of Shogun decided on a general abandonment of the campaign. Orders for a complete re-embarkation were issued accordingly, which began in the early winter, but had to be carried out with extreme caution, to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of the unfavourable tactical position in which an embarking army is always placed with hostile forces in great strength close at hand. It was some time, therefore, before the last troops were on board, but as the Chinese and Korean armies showed no enterprise in grasping the opportunity, the whole process was safely completed in due course, and the transports sailed for home escorted by the main Japanese fleet under Konishi, who had been the first to arrive in Korea nearly six years before and was now the last to leave.

But the Japanese misfortunes were not quite yet at an end. Yi-sun had no sympathy with the supineness of his land colleagues in allowing their enemy to embark without striking them a farewell blow, and resolved that on his own element at least they should feel one. Watching his chance, he hurried up from the westward,

just as the immense convoy were fully started. The great battle that followed was the Korean Trafalgar, for even if the defeat of the Japanese was not nearly so complete as that of France and Spain, it ended the battle-fleet actions of Japan for 300 years, but at the cost of the life of the greatest seaman against whom they ever fought. In certain other respects it had a dramatic piquancy of its own, for although the very final act of a six years' struggle, it was the only occasion on which the two chief participants ever met as direct adversaries in action. For many reasons the moment of the mutual sighting of their respective fleets must have been pregnant with profound emotions for both. On the one side was Konishi, the valiant and capable commander by land and sea, always inspired by a disinterested sense of duty; shrewd in council; formidable in war. Konishi had been the outstanding figure on the Japanese side throughout, although never the Commander-in-Chief of the forces on land. His army division had been the first to disembark on Korean soil and head the original invasion; it was the first to enter the enemy's capital and advanced nearest to the Chinese frontier of any. Then when the tide of success turned it covered the Japanese retirement with equal distinction. Konishi had been averse to Hideyoshi's obstinate policy of recommencing operations, understanding the problem far better than the latter, but was selected, nevertheless, for the highly responsible position of commander at sea; which on the whole he filled with conspicuous success, if not genius, and it was to him as such that was entrusted the last duty of ensuring the safety of the final withdrawal. He survived the day, but was now associated with definite failure through no fault of his own, and had to endure the mortification of seeing all his efforts and sacrifices brought to nothing. On the other side was Yi-sun. When for the last time the Korean admiral sighted an enemy's fleet ahead he had only a very few more hours to live, but for that fleeting space he enjoyed at least the supreme satisfaction of seeing the last of the invaders leave his native land and

the knowledge that no man had been more instrumental than himself in bringing that end to pass.

The great convoy moved slowly, as such formations usually do, and Yi-sun had no difficulty in catching it up. Once more he attacked with all his old dash, but Konishi, with his numerically superior fleet, made a splendid defence, and the engagement was long and desperately contested. Details of its phases do not exist, and the old accounts of the results are not in complete agreement, for whereas those from Korean sources say that the majority of the Japanese ships were sunk, the Japanese versions say that it was the majority that escaped. Both sides admit heavy losses, however, and it seems certain that the convoy was broken up, although a portion eventually reached Japan in safety. In the height of the action Yi-sun was killed; a fitting end to such a career. It is always difficult for Englishmen to admit that Nelson ever had an equal in his profession, but if any man is entitled to be so regarded, it should surely be this great naval commander of Asiatic race who never knew defeat and died in the presence of the enemy; of whose movements a track-chart might be compiled from the wrecks of hundreds of Japanese ships lying with their valiant crews at the bottom of the sea, off the coasts of the Korean peninsula. No commander, on the sea at least, ever more thoroughly justified Napoleon's saying that "war is an affair not of men but of a man," for Yi-sun had to work with inferior material. Individually the Koreans may, perhaps, have been better seamen in some ways than the Japanese, but they were never their equals as natural born fighters; and it was only because their admiral infused his own unconquerable spirit through his whole fleet that, under his leadership, his men were ready at any time to meet a physically braver adversary with enthusiasm for the encounter and confidence in the result. It does not lessen his credit that his successes were partly due to the use of a vessel that he had himself designed, with such superior fighting qualities that nothing afloat could face her. The object of war is to defeat the enemy,

and the man or the nation that attains that end by the intelligent production of more effective weapons than the adversary is fully entitled to the success thereby achieved. Moreover, Yi-sun not only produced the better ship, but he made the very best use of her qualities; and it seems, in truth, no exaggeration to assert that from first to last he never made a mistake, for his work was so complete under each variety of circumstances as to defy criticism. Although his whole record of service is well known, there is not a single point of importance in which his judgment can ever be held to have been at fault. At the very outset he realized that the sea could not be made impassable to the Japanese by splitting up the Korean fleet into squadrons stationed at fixed points round the coast. The unsoundness of such a policy is well enough understood in these days, but in his time there were no recognized principles of naval strategy in existence, and he had to work entirely on his own initiative. He saw a situation so clearly, however, that his inborn confidence in a proper course of action made him fearless of responsibility, and his native courage did the rest. Leaving his first station, he went in search of the enemy, but did not commit the error of cruising about to seize transports while the Japanese fighting fleets remained in existence and accessible to attack. He recognized from the first that the best method of reaching the fruit was to take a sharp axe and cut down the tree. And so he deliberately began by attacking the fighting fleets, on which all else depended, and having utterly demolished these first, spread his activities not only over one line of the enemy's communications but over all. His whole career might be summarized by saying that, although he had no lessons from past history to serve as a guide, he waged war on the sea as it should be waged if it is to produce definite results, and ended by making the supreme sacrifice of a defender of his country.

In all the volumes of history there is perhaps no record of any war which in its own course furnished such a complete series of lessons on all the fundamental laws pertaining to the conduct of oversea campaigns as this

conflict between Japan and her mainland neighbours. Some principles of importance were emphasized by the consequences attendant on failure to recognize them, others by the results of their proper observance, and others, again, by both. But all received illustration in one way or another. The first phase of hostilities demonstrated forcibly and immediately the folly of crossing the seas to attack an enemy without first having ensured beyond reasonable doubt that they are safe to cross. This may seem a simple enough axiom nowadays, and yet that very mistake was made by Napoleon himself when he went to Egypt two centuries later. The second phase of hostilities proved that, although maritime superiority is the indispensable preliminary to all success in attacking an oversea enemy, it is not enough in itself to subdue an opponent whose national existence is independent of sea communications, and must in such cases be accompanied or followed by the application of force on an adequate scale on shore. A fleet may achieve unaided the conquest of an *island* by threatening it with the grip of blockade, and this has sometimes happened; the most recent case being the surrender of the strongly garrisoned Spanish colony of Cuba, which capitulated after the destruction of Spanish sea power, although scarcely any invading troops were on its soil. And it is common knowledge that if the maritime supremacy of Great Britain passed into an enemy's hands, Great Britain's fate would be sealed without any necessity for employing an army to bring her to terms. But if the enemy to be attacked across the water is a continental State, or a self-supporting island—such as Japan was, for example, until very recent times—sea command is only the first step towards overthrow. This was doubly exemplified in the Korean War. In the first phase the complete domination of Yi-sun was of inestimable defensive value to Korea, but it was no serious threat to the hearths and homes of the Japanese, even though Japan was almost denuded of troops, because there was no Korean army fit to follow up the work of the fleet and no Chinese army ready. And when four years

later the command of the sea passed to Japan as a result of Konishi's victory afloat, the insufficiency of the Japanese army caused the failure of Hideyoshi's resumed efforts at conquering Korea.

Thirdly, the war illustrated in the most unmistakable manner the importance of the offensive in maritime operations, by the consequences both of its adoption on the one hand and its rejection on the other. If Yi-sun had remained in a purely defensive attitude at the outset, the whole course of events would have been different, for although the actual conquest of China might not in any case have proved a feasible military operation with the resources in men at Japan's disposal, the Japanese conquest of Korea had given them so strong a hold on all its strategical points, that they would have been very difficult to dislodge by land attack if the army of occupation could have received regular and adequate supplies from Japan. Conversely, when the Koreans lost the command of the sea the policy adopted by Konishi of waiting for Yi-sun to attack instead of attacking Yi-sun kept the invading forces in a state of constant apprehension for the safety of their sea communications, weakened their resolve, and allowed the comparatively minor Korean fleet to strike a last blow after the enemy was embarked and helpless, which Yi-sun of all men was the least likely to miss.

Fourthly, the conflict supplied a very striking demonstration of the value of mechanical inventions as applied to belligerent purposes. Mechanical inventions will not win a war of themselves—as some highly placed specialist officers seemed to believe when anti-submarine appliances were receiving attention in 1916—but, when added to a proper understanding of strategic principles and used with a proper spirit, they go far to ensure victory against a less progressive opponent, however brave he may be. As a rule, if we may judge by well-known cases, the tendency of soldiers and sailors is to view new war appliances with distrust. The committee of British naval officers appointed to report on the advisability or otherwise



of introducing steam-engines into the navy, condemned them in unmeasured terms as dangerous inventions. Only the experiences of Sebastopol overcame the reluctance of the British Admiralty to adopt armour-plating. There are officers of high rank still alive who were predicting that submarines would never prove a really serious danger to fleets, not half a dozen years before the time when they came near to bringing the Allies' cause to ruin. And so also on the land, to take one notable case only, it is well known that many very highly placed soldiers disbelieved that tanks would have any effect on tactics in the field. But a minority in both professions are gifted with a more clear-sighted imagination than their less independent colleagues, and, refusing to be trammelled by the conventions of their day, strike out into new lines. Such a man was Lord Fisher in the twentieth century, and such a man was Admiral Yi-sun in the sixteenth. Both produced vessels of such novel and powerful design that nothing previously built could face them, and it was the fortune of Yi-sun that he himself had the opportunity of demonstrating how to make the very best use of the invincible ship that was the product of his own brain. While under his command she always seems to have been in the right place at the right time.

The war had cost the Japanese thousands of lives, hundreds of ships, and a great expenditure of their economic resources—all without any material gain whatever. On the other hand, it had been very rich in experiences as a guide of the greatest value to naval and military administration and policy. Whether these would have borne any fruit in improving warlike efficiency in the immediately succeeding period it is impossible to say, for Japan was on the eve of an era of 250 years of complete and deliberately adopted seclusion from the rest of the world when the war ended, and, with the exception of a very small expedition to Formosa, did not again undertake hostilities abroad till the year 1894. But the Japanese have tenacious memories, and when, almost exactly 300 years after the Korean enterprise

of the sixteenth century, they were again involved in the solution of a precisely similar strategic problem, in the very same arena, it is difficult to believe that the experiences of their ancestors had no effect on their plans; for whereas on the first occasion they blundered on many points of cardinal importance and ended in failure, on the second they made only one mistake of any consequence and ended in complete success. Perhaps, above all, they remembered the effect on their former plans of the offensive maritime strategy of Yi-sun, for they have never omitted in their later wars to act on the offensive at sea themselves. And to a like extent they have now thoroughly grasped the importance of being abreast of other countries in regard to the most up-to-date and efficient ships and appliances of war. With these facts in mind, it is interesting and perhaps not altogether unprofitable to speculate as to the possible course of history in the East, supposing that the Japanese of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, instead of shutting themselves up as they did, had come forward and displayed a spirit of progress such as their descendants do now. If the latter are perfectly competent to build and handle the complicated modern battleship, it seems reasonable to believe that the former could have learnt to build and handle the much simpler wooden liner of an earlier period. And if with this to work upon, a warlike and ambitious Shogun had been again in power, it requires no exaggerated flight of the imagination to picture a fleet of Japanese 74's dominating the whole Western Pacific, and with the co-operation of well-equipped troops extending the dominions of the Mikado right through the Malay Archipelago, perhaps even to Australia. Under such conditions the hold of the Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese on their Eastern Asiatic colonies must have been precarious, unless they kept on very friendly terms with the ruling Shoguns; for in the state of European politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, none of them would have received material assistance from the Western Powers against an attack by Japan on the far

side of the world. Even the position of Great Britain in India might not have been secure without the despatch of a much larger naval force to the Indian Ocean than could properly have been spared during the frequent wars in European and Atlantic waters.

These hypothetical conditions, however, never arose, and the Korean War had no immediately obvious effects on the status of Japan as a world Power, either in regard to material force or naval and military efficiency. In tracing the influence of the sea on that chapter of her national existence, the conclusion to which the history of events seems to point is that, whereas it had assisted Japan in the days of Kublai Khan, it assisted her enemies in the days of Hideyoshi, because her enemies had learnt how to make use of it in war, which the Japanese had not. But in both of these wars it was by that element more than anything else that the plans of the invaders had been brought to nothing.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PERIOD OF VOLUNTARY SECLUSION TO THE OPENING OF THE TREATY PORTS AND THE ANTI-FOREIGN DIS- TURBANCES.

THE death of Hideyoshi and the end of the Korean War marked the close of one sharply defined period in the national affairs of the Japanese people and the opening of another, in which, for the space of two centuries and a half, they had no external history whatever. It is true that for the first twenty years of the new epoch they did still associate with men from other lands, but only in their own ports for purely commercial purposes, and not only did they not embark on foreign wars, but they maintained no official intercourse with the rulers or Governments of other States. In treating of the special subject of these pages, therefore, a long gap occurs at this point, corresponding chronologically to the interval between the reign of James I. of England and Queen Victoria, and our sources of information regarding Japanese affairs before that interval are of a widely different nature from those referring to the incidents which followed it. Any narrative which deals with events up to the close of the Korean War must necessarily be founded on old, vague, and often incomplete records; but when next the influence of the sea on Japanese history had become so unmistakably manifested as to deserve special attention, a period had been reached of so recent a date, that it lies within the memory of men still living, and every detail of important events is accurately known from the first-hand evidence of participants. At the same time, some reference to the period immediately following the Korean War is not altogether out of place here, for although it was not a period in which the influence of the sea was

directly traceable in Japanese affairs, it was a time of political events and developments within the Empire which profoundly affected Japan's relationship towards other countries; and all questions concerning the attitude of an island State in regard to other lands must have their maritime aspects.

On the death of Hideyoshi, in 1598, he was succeeded as Shogun by Iyeyasu, of the Tokugawa clan—a man with a remarkable talent for domestic administration but no inclination for foreign enterprise, whose whole period of authority was devoted to consolidating the power of his office throughout the Empire, and with it the power of his own clan. The Korean War had become unpopular long before its close, and caused much discontent among the rival clans by reason of the taxation it entailed, but Iyeyasu suppressed all signs of active trouble with a firm hand, and the civil wars which had so long and so often stained the previous history of Japan were things of the past under his strong rule. Like his predecessor, he encouraged foreign trade, and the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch merchants who arrived in Japan received his support and assistance. His policy, therefore, although largely dictated by personal interests, was on the whole beneficial to Japan, tending as it did to promote peace, progress, and wealth.

One feature in the general domestic situation caused him considerable trouble, however. Reference was made in the last chapter to the activities of the Jesuit missionaries who accompanied the first Portuguese traders. These had increased in numbers, and representatives of other Roman Catholic fraternities had arrived in Japan and entered into the work of Christian propaganda with great energy. Impressed by the fervour and courage of these missionaries, many of whom were ready and even anxious for martyrdom, thousands of Japanese had embraced Christianity, including several men in high position—as, for example, Konishi himself—and the power and influence of the Roman Catholic clerics were constantly on the increase, particularly in Kiushiu.

So long as these missionaries confined their attention to spreading the doctrines of their faith, they aroused no serious antagonism except amongst the Buddhist and Shinto priests. As a nation the Japanese have never been fanatical adherents of any one special religion, although the majority profess—or did profess—Buddhism. The Shoguns, therefore, had no reason, of either a personal or political nature, to oppose Christianity, and Hideyoshi displayed considerable interest in the tenets of Roman Catholicism, although he never became a convert. But by degrees the success of the missionaries in obtaining proselytes led them to aim at establishing an influence in other directions, and from small beginnings their lust for power went farther and farther. Whole villages of converts looked to their priests for guidance in everything they did, and displayed a decreasing deference to other authority and an increasing antagonism to their own countrymen of other faiths. Riots and disturbances became frequent in the Christian districts of Kiushiu, and if the Christians were not always the aggressors, they were at least seldom slow to make reprisals, and sometimes offered forcible resistance to the Government officials engaged in repressing disorder. Eventually the doctrine began to spread that a Roman Catholic owes his first allegiance to the Pope, and the Japanese Christians sent a mission of their own to Europe, by a homeward-bound Spanish ship, to do homage at Rome. Such a theory has rarely found acquiescence even among Roman Catholic princes, and its enunciation in a non-Christian country like Japan was certain to lead to serious trouble sooner or later. By the time of Iyeyasu's accession to power the status of the Christian community had become the most difficult political question in Japan; but although he occasionally treated the Christians with severity, he did not attempt to deal with the matter on a wholesale plan, and it was still an unsolved problem when he retired from the Shogunate in favour of another successor of the same clan. This Shogun also passed it on in his turn to yet another named Iyemitsu.

A different stamp of ruler altogether now came into authority, with neither the administrative talents of Iyeyasu nor the liberal statesmanship of Hideyoshi; but although narrow-minded, obstinate, and easily alarmed for his own position, Iyemitsu was not lacking in energy or force of purpose, and he resolved to deal with the Christians once for all in drastic fashion. To that end he initiated a policy for the extermination of the native Christians—subject only to the alternative of recantation—and for the expulsion of all aliens, as the root cause of the whole evil. Nor did his intentions stop there. In his eyes foreigners were barbarians of an inferior race, association with whom must necessarily prove demoralizing to the Japanese, and, to prevent the possibility of any such contamination, he made it a capital offence for his own countrymen to leave their native shores. To facilitate the enforcement of this decree, he issued a prohibition against the building of any vessel of more than 75 feet in length—a dimension sufficient for the coasters and fishing craft which are always most necessary to Japan as an Empire of islands, but not for sea-going ships—and at the same time gave orders to the local officials at all the ports in the realm, that any foreign vessel entering a Japanese harbour was to be destroyed and the whole of her crew put to death.

The expulsion of the foreigners presented no great difficulty, on account of their small numbers, especially as the bond of a common religion was not strong enough to prevent violent political and commercial animosities among themselves, for the Spanish Roman Catholics quarrelled ceaselessly with Portuguese Roman Catholics, and the Protestant Dutch were hated by both. It was effected without serious trouble, therefore, in spite of angry and vigorous protests, although the Dutch obtained a respite, on the grounds that they had kept strictly to trade and made no attempts to proselytize or obtain political power. But the extermination of the native converts was quite another matter. These numbered about a quarter of a million, including many men of noble

rank, and, as it is a fine point in the Japanese temperament always to be ready to face death for an ideal, the whole, with very few exceptions, were quite ready for martyrdom, but determined to sell their lives dearly. Only a small fraction accepted the alternative of abjuring their faith, and Iyemitsu found that he had a task of great magnitude before him, requiring all the forces at his disposal. The process was nevertheless taken in hand and carried through ruthlessly for a period of about five years, during the whole of which time the converts defended themselves with a fortitude and constancy that evoked the admiration of even their persecutors, until the last remnants to the number of about 40,000 retired to a position on the coast, of such great natural strength that all efforts to break into it from the land side failed. It was equally inaccessible from the sea, and as Iyemitsu had no artillery his operations were brought to a deadlock. In this dilemma he took the strange step of appealing for help to the Dutch, of whose ships a few were still in Japanese waters by his permission. The Dutch agreed to help, but at a price. They made it a condition of lending an armed vessel that the edict for their expulsion should be rescinded and that for the future they, and they alone, should enjoy the privilege of trade with Japan. To this Iyemitsu expressed his assent, and a Dutch ship thereupon bombarded the converts' position and forced them to evacuate it, whereupon the Shogun's forces fell upon them and slaughtered them all. Harsh things have been said about the Netherlands for their action in this matter, which was in the main undoubtedly inspired by the opportunity of acquiring the monopoly of a very lucrative trade; but it should be borne in mind as an extenuating consideration that the Roman Catholics on their part regarded the Dutch as heretics, beyond the pale of clemency, and would undoubtedly have acted without hesitation in the same way had the conditions been reversed, whether any inducements from a commercial point of view were involved or not. Having obtained his object, Iyemitsu respected his pledge so far as to allow



Holland the sole monopoly of trade in Japan, but under such humiliating conditions, that it seems incredible that any representatives of a race of proved national courage and self-respect should have submitted to them, in doing which they lowered all Europeans in Japanese eyes. Except, however, for a handful of Dutchmen, virtually imprisoned within a high wall on a small island in Nagasaki Harbour, Japan was now clear of foreigners and Christians alike.

The laws prohibiting Japanese to travel abroad or build large vessels were also enforced to the letter, and, as far as it lay in their power, the various Court officials carried out the order to destroy foreign vessels entering Japanese ports, for a Spanish ship that did so at a somewhat later period was attacked by a swarm of boats and set on fire, eventually blowing up with all her crew after a desperate resistance. Preparations were hastily made at a later date still for treating the British frigate *Phaeton* in the same way when she entered Nagasaki Harbour in 1808 in search of Dutch prizes, but she sailed out again before they were complete, leaving the commander of the local defences to commit suicide for his supposed disgrace, although she could easily have taken care of herself if his dispositions had had time to mature.

And so, before the middle of the seventeenth century, the land which was destined at a later era to become a Great Power had voluntarily and deliberately settled down to a period of 200 years of complete abstinence from intercourse with the outer world. Surrounded on every side by the sea which they were debarred from crossing, and refusing to receive visitors from its farther shores, the Japanese entered upon a phase of existence during which they might as well have been residents in another planet for all they knew of events passing in foreign lands. It was not a period of actual unhappiness, for they were at peace within their own borders, and of serious want there was none. But national development was arrested, and history makes it clear that the nation which stands

still stands in danger. Asiatics have never displayed much inventive originality in the application of science to war, and as this rule applied fully to the Japanese, their weapons and defensive arrangements remained on stationary models in the absence of example or instruction from elsewhere, and became entirely obsolete as time passed on.

All through this period the world was shrinking, in a sense, and its different parts drawing closer together, by reason of the great progress in the knowledge of navigation, and war in other lands was a business in which science more and more played a part. The ships of England, France, Holland, Spain, and Portugal were carrying their pioneers to conquer and colonize fresh lands across the oceans, some at no great distance from Japan itself, and all the coasts of the globe, except in the polar regions, were becoming by degrees accessible to their visits. With the expanding dimensions of new naval designs, heavier armaments were possible, maritime war was evolving fresh tactical methods, and the principles which should govern the battle dispositions of fleets of large vessels were being demonstrated by distinguished British, French, and Dutch admirals. Salt water ceased in itself to be a formidable obstacle to military enterprise, and whereas in the days of the Mongol Khans Japan had been in a safer position than the States of Central Asia, these conditions underwent by degrees a complete reversal. Long before the Japanese were awakened to the danger of living in a state of isolated stagnation, their shores and coastal traffic were at the mercy of attacks to which they could have opposed only the feeblest resistance; and it was perhaps fortunate for them that in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries the Powers of the West were so frequently at war with each other, that none had either opportunity or inducement to molest a weak country on the other side of the world.

With nautical science making such advances, however, it was impossible that Japan should remain immersed in a self-constituted prison for ever, and her emergence

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was eventually occasioned by a factor which did not exist when her voluntary seclusion first began. The secession of the British North American Colonies from the Mother Country brought for the first time an independent Power into politics which lay to the east of Japan instead of the west, and in due course the Pacific Ocean was sailed by keels under its flag. Most of these were engaged in the whaling trade, in pursuit of which a few crossed to the Asiatic side, where some were wrecked on the Japanese coasts and their crews ill-treated. These incidents involved Japan in a matter of recognized mutual obligation among civilized nations. Reciprocal trade might be a matter for the individual decision of separate States, but reciprocal assistance against the accidents attendant on oceanic navigation was accepted as a common duty by all, and it was not to be expected that a highly progressive country, such as the United States, would refrain from taking the necessary steps to protect the interests of its citizens, on a question over which no civilized Government would raise any difficulty whatever. But Japan, although living under an established social organization with laws of its own, was not administered by a civilized Government, in the elsewhere accepted sense of the term, and was notoriously averse to official intercourse with other countries on any subject whatever. It was no easy matter, therefore, to compel the Japanese to attend to representations from outside sources, unless by the display of force on a sufficient scale to ensure at least a respectful hearing. But even then it required very skilful diplomacy to attain the end in view without bloodshed, to which the United States President was very loath to resort, and it was necessary for him to exercise great care in selecting the man to handle such highly explosive material. Lord Palmerston once remarked that whenever he had particularly difficult negotiations to undertake with foreigners he preferred to employ a naval officer, and although that view has seldom found favour with his successors at the British Foreign Office, something of the kind was evidently uppermost in the

mind of President Fillmore, for his choice fell upon Commodore Perry, of the United States Navy, not only as commander of the squadron which he intended to send as a means of compelling respect to a United States diplomatic mission, but as his actual representative in the transactions which he hoped to effect with the Japanese authorities. This selection was amply justified by the results.

Perry sailed at the end of 1852 with the frigates *Susquehanna* and *Mississippi*, and the sloops *Plymouth* and *Saratoga*. No line-of-battle ships in any country had at that time been supplied with steam-engines, and, as it was considered advisable by the United States Navy Department that only steamers should be employed in this mission, the squadron was limited to the four steamships mentioned, which, although not of the most formidable fighting quality, presented in the aggregate a sufficient force to impress the Japanese. The Commodore was instructed to present a letter from President Fillmore to the "Ruler of Japan," and to endeavour to obtain the sanction of the latter to a treaty for securing proper protection for shipwrecked crews, and for the allocation of a port in which American whalers could obtain ordinary supplies; also for permission to establish a coal depot on some small, uninhabited island; and lastly, if possible, for the opening of one or more ports for the sale of American goods. No reasonable objection could be raised on any grounds to an insistence on all these demands, except the last, and even if it is not within the legitimate rights of one nation to force its trade upon another, the Japanese themselves are now the first to admit that Perry's strong line in this matter led in the end to great benefits to themselves.

The squadron sailed from an Atlantic port, via the Cape of Good Hope and Hong-Kong, and arrived in Yokohama Bay in July, 1853, where their appearance caused the greatest consternation among Japanese officials and people alike. It was an unknown occurrence for even a single foreign vessel to enter their harbours, and here were no

less than four in company. Obviously it was impossible to attempt the enforcement of the law by which these ships should be destroyed for visiting a Japanese port, but so long a period had elapsed since any occasion had arisen for acting upon its provisions, that this was a minor matter in itself, if only they could be got rid of. It was of far more consequence that Japanese interests in other directions appeared to be in imminent danger. Firstly, they feared for the safety of their coasting vessels and fishing craft, for, although no sea-going ship had been built in Japan within the memory of many generations, their coastwise traffic and fishing industries were just as important to their economic welfare as they had always been. Secondly, their coastal population was apprehensive of attack on their towns and villages. Such a proceeding was no doubt far from the intentions of Perry, who would only have resorted to it in the face of extreme provocation, but the Japanese were in the completest ignorance of the customs of war among civilized peoples, and overawed by the impressive size, to them, of the American ships. A general and immediate exodus for the interior consequently took place among the inhabitants around Yokohama Bay, and Tokio was in such a state of panic, that the civic authorities, although thoroughly alarmed themselves, had to issue calming proclamations to allay the confusion.

Perry informed the local Governor, who was the first official with whom he could get into contact, that he wished to see the Emperor's chief Minister to explain the object of his visit. This message having been forwarded to the Shogun, a Chinese interpreter in the employ of the latter was sent on board the *Susquehanna*, who returned to the Shogun with the President's letter, upon the receipt of which a general council of the Government officials and nobles near at hand was assembled, and sat in debate all night without arriving at any decision, except to temporize if possible. A large section, in supreme ignorance of the true weakness of Japan, were all in favour of rejecting the American proposals off-hand, but the more clear-headed

members realized that these proposals were backed by a force which it was beyond their power to resist, and that their rejection would merely postpone the inevitable, while probably entailing serious consequences in the process of settlement. Eventually a reply was sent to say that the matter was of such importance that it would require long consideration, and requesting that in the meanwhile the squadron should withdraw. Perry agreed to this, as he realized that the Japanese authorities had been placed in a difficult position, in which ruthless measures might only throw everything into chaos; but at the same time he warned them that he would return for an answer early in the following year. He then sailed for the coast of China, where he remained for the winter months.

Returning in the following spring, he demanded a reply to the President's letter and his own draft of a treaty. No actual progress had been made by the Japanese in the interval towards either, but his reappearance made it clear that he was not to be put off by further indefinite excuses; and another council meeting was called, at which, after a long and heated controversy, the war party were eventually outvoted and it was agreed that a treaty embodying the four points raised by Perry should be drawn up, in which Nagasaki and Hakodate were to be nominated as ports to be open to American traders. When completed it was signed on behalf of Japan by three officials detailed by the Shogun, and not by the Mikado, who had been ignored by the Japanese administrators throughout, and was strongly opposed to the whole transaction, being profoundly ignorant of the weakness of his own country when confronted by such a Power as the United States. In this attitude he was supported by a large party of influential but equally ignorant territorial nobles. The success of Perry's mission very naturally induced other Governments to ask for equal concessions, and before the year had closed a precisely similar treaty was concluded between the Shogun and Great Britain, to which, however, the Mikado was equally averse. These two diplomatic instruments only aimed at the establishment of amenities

in very minor matters, and were not followed for a long time by any permanent official intercourse, but they were the first steps towards breaking down the barrier with which Japan had shut out the world for so long. For four years they answered their purpose and no effort was made to enlarge their scope, but by 1858 the resulting trade had assumed such proportions that new and more extensive provisions for commercial intercourse had become necessary; and after another long period of discussion and delay, revised treaties were drawn up, in which Great Britain, the United States, France, and Holland were all granted equal commercial privileges. In 1859 the Shogun agreed that these four Powers and Prussia should send regular diplomatic representatives to Japan, although these were not accredited to the Court of the Mikado at Kioto, who still remained obstinately opposed to any kind of dealings with foreigners. Yokohama was nominated as a third treaty port, which place, although only at that time a fishing village, had a good anchorage and was conveniently near to Tokio, where the Shogun had his capital and seat of government, and where the foreign diplomats took up their official residence.

But, although a prosperous and increasing trade was fairly established, anti-foreign prejudice continued to exist among a large section of the nobles and their armed retainers, and during the two years which succeeded the arrival of the foreign official representatives a whole series of murderous attacks were made, usually after dark, on foreigners of different nationalities, including members of the various diplomatic staffs. The British Legation was twice broken into at night by bands of assassins, who killed several of the attendants and two marine sentries; and on the second occasion Colonel Neale, the British Minister, had a narrow escape himself, while two of his secretaries were severely wounded. American, French, and Dutch subjects were murdered in the streets of Yokohama, and the anti-foreign party even went to the length of assassinating certain of the Shogun's principal officials for holding intercourse with the foreign Ministers,

which so intimidated the others, that the diplomatists found it impossible to obtain the punishment of the perpetrators of any of these acts of violence. This immunity naturally encouraged others to follow their example. Among the most powerful clans in Japan, next to that to which the Shogun belonged, were those of Satsuma and Chosiu, and both were very jealous of the supreme position of the Tokugawa family, which had retained the office of Shogun from generation to generation ever since the days of Iyeyasu, 250 years before. Both belonged to the western parts of the Empire, the Satsuma estates lying not in the main island at all, but in Kiushiu. Both also had raised their large forces of armed retainer into comparatively efficient military organizations. By obtaining models and drawings of smooth-bore ordnance at various periods from the Dutch agents at Nagasaki, they had succeeded in casting a number of guns, which they mounted as sea defences, and which, although not a match for the rifled armaments of the European vessels in Japanese waters, were destined to prove capable of inflicting considerable damage to ships at close range, and were believed to be equal to any artillery in the world by their possessors. The policy of these clans was to support the Mikado in his anti-foreign attitude, partly to add to the difficulties and embarrassments of the Shogun's pro-foreign administration—which was enjoying most of the benefits of trade through Customs dues—and partly because they were as ignorant as the Mikado himself of the hopelessness of offering resistance to the foreigners by force. Of this support the Mikado availed himself by asking the Prince of Satsuma to proceed to Tokio with 600 of his armed retainers as an escort to an official from the Imperial Court, who was to convey an order to the Shogun to break off all foreign intercourse forthwith. The Shogun received the order—which he knew he could not obey, but promised the Imperial messenger, nevertheless, that he would—and the latter, with the Satsuma chief and escort, started to return to the Mikado at Kioto. As the procession was passing



along the main road, close to the foreign settlements in Yokohama, they met a riding-party of three English merchants and a lady, whom several of the Satsuma soldiers slashed at with their swords, killing one named Richardson and wounding the others, who only saved their lives by galloping off as fast as they could. On hearing of this incident the British Minister immediately proceeded to the Shogun to lodge a strong protest and a request for the seizure and punishment of the criminals, but the Shogun frankly admitted that it was beyond his power to effect their arrest, and could only promise to forward the Minister's request to the Satsuma chief, who in the meantime was being received with marked honour by the Mikado on his return to Kioto. Shortly after this occurrence the new British Legation, which had just been built but was not yet occupied, was burnt to the ground during the night by a party of incendiaries.

Much more serious developments were soon to follow. All these attacks had been the work of sword or dagger, in the hands either of individual fanatics or of small bands of anti-foreign desperadoes of humble position, most of whom avoided publicity. It was reserved for the Prince of Chosiu, one of the most powerful nobles of Japan, to embark on acts of open war with shot and shell against the shipping under foreign flags in Japanese waters. His territories lay at the extreme western end of Nipon, the main island of the Empire, and formed the north shore of the narrow and tortuous Straits of Shimonoseki, which give access to the Inland Sea at the western extremity, and through it afford the shortest route between Nagasaki or the ports of China on the one hand, and Yokohama and the ports of Central and Western Japan on the other. As previously observed, the Chosiu clan were, according to Japanese standards, well organized and equipped for war; and had erected a series of batteries commanding these Straits on plans taken from Dutch military treatises, which were armed with 8-inch shell guns and 32-pounders. They had also purchased and armed with similar weapons a steamer and two sailing

vessels, and, in pursuance of an understanding with the Mikado, their Prince proceeded to take forcible measures to close the Straits, which he fully believed he was strong enough to effect, even in the face of foreign opposition.

The first intimation received of his intentions took the form of an attack without any warning, on June 25, 1863, on the United States steamer *Pembroke* while on passage from Yokohama to Shanghai by the usual route through the Straits. As she entered the narrows and approached

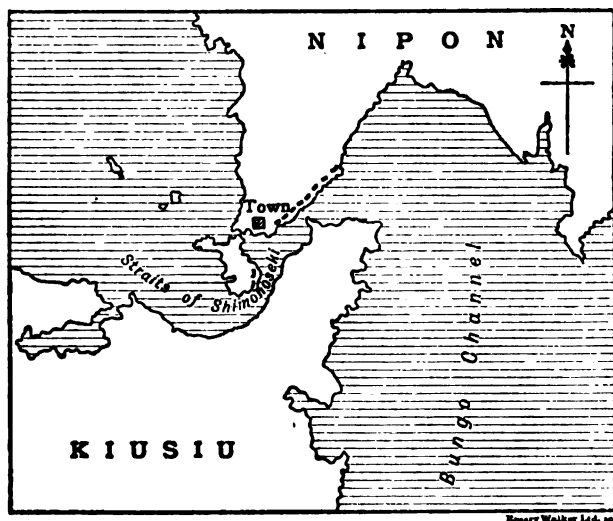


FIG. 2.—STRAITS OF SHIMONOSEKI AND APPROACHES.

Forts indicated thus ----

the north shore, under which the Chosiu men-of-war were at anchor, she suddenly found herself under a hail of round-shot, and only escaped sinking by steering hard over to the farther side of the Straits and proceeding at full speed. Utterly at a loss to account for this treatment, her master made a full report to the United States Consul at Nagasaki next morning, where he called to drop his Japanese Inland Sea pilot, and where the incident caused great excitement and conjecture among foreign shipping and commercial circles. Before it was known in Yoko-

hama the French naval despatch-vessel *Kienchang* had started from that port to make the same voyage, completely in ignorance of the danger awaiting her and meeting with worse fortune than her predecessor. She happened to arrive at the eastern approach to the Straits too late to complete the passage through before dark, and, as they were unlighted and unsurveyed at that time, no traffic passed except by daylight. In accordance with custom, therefore, she anchored to wait, but chanced to berth within range of the eastern batteries, and her anchor had scarcely touched bottom when they opened a rapid fire. Before having time even to slip her cable she was hulled in seven places and much damaged in her upper gear, only escaping destruction by steaming as fast as possible through the Bungo Channel, an alternative exit from the Inland Sea to the southward.

As in the case of the *Pembroke*, this outrage was known next day at Nagasaki by the arrival of the vessel herself, and conjecture became rife as to whether other ships would undergo similar treatment. This matter was not left for long in doubt, and the next to experience it was a man-of-war. The first two vessels were helpless to defend themselves and might be attacked without fear of immediate return fire; but the Chosiu leaders cannot be accused of want of courage, for the third was the Dutch 16-gun corvette *Medusa*, which could and did retaliate at once. The *Medusa* was at Nagasaki when the other vessels arrived, on the point of starting for Yokohama with the Netherlands Minister on board. Her captain heard all about their escapes, but did not believe that the batteries would dare to fire on a well-armed ship, and determined to follow the usual route instead of the longer open sea passage. He was soon undeceived. Entering the Straits at the western end, the corvette in due course approached the Chosiu war-vessels, which were lying with their heads to the flood-tide behind a shoal ridge with only two fathoms of water on it. Above and behind them on the cliffs were the westernmost of the shore batteries. As the *Medusa* drew abreast of the vessels she was received

by several warning rounds of blank, but her commanding officer was not a man to be deterred by threats, and steamed on; whereupon the whole of the Japanese guns ashore and afloat opened fire with shot and shell. Her men were already at their quarters and immediately replied with all her port broadside. Her first effort was to sink the Chosiu ships, but owing to the intervening shoal she could not get within 600 yards of them, and meanwhile was receiving a cross-fire from four to five batteries, under which she began to suffer severely. Contenting herself, therefore, with several broadsides at the hostile vessels, which silenced their fire, she made a dash to get through, running the gauntlet of the whole line of defences, whose fire she returned in succession as fast as her men could load and lay. In passing, she was hit seventeen times in the hull by 8-inch shell and 32-pound shot, and fourteen times in her spars and funnel, several of her crew being killed or wounded, and some of her guns temporarily disabled. The Netherlands Minister had a narrow escape himself. But she was undamaged in machinery or steering-gear and reached Yokohama two days later.

Before her arrival information had been received of the attack on the *Pembroke*, and the *Medusa* brought the news of the attacks on the *Kienchang* and herself. The United States Navy was at that period only represented in Japanese waters by the 6-gun sloop *Wyoming*, as the American Civil War was at its height and the other vessels were required nearer home. Where the much more heavily armed Dutch ship had experienced such a severe handling, it did not seem possible that a sloop could undertake adequate reprisals for firing on the United States flag; but her commanding officer determined, nevertheless, to do whatever might prove to be possible, and started at once for Shimonoseki on receipt of the intelligence. His tactics were not only bold but skilful, for instead of steering directly towards the entrance of the Straits from the Inland Sea, he kept close over to the Kiushiu shore, which at this part forms an acute angle,

with one side as the south coast of the Straits and the apex as the promontory which marks their eastern termination. By hugging the land behind this cape, the *Wyoming* was screened from the batteries on the Chosiu side till within a comparatively close range, and having arrived at its point, she went full speed round it, and was well on her way across the open water towards where the Chosiu vessels lay—which her captain determined to make the main object of his attack—before either they or the guns on shore had discovered his presence and come into action. The enemy's vessels were moored in starboard quarter-line in their usual berths, with their heads pointing to the westward, and the steamer at the far end of the line, in that direction. The *Wyoming* therefore approached from their port quarter, and aided by her light draught passed either over or round the shoal behind which they lay. Steaming at her utmost speed under the concentrated fire of all the batteries, she made for the interval between the two westernmost ships, and passing them within 50 yards gave them each a full broadside at that range with staggering effect. The ships to starboard returned it, however, and she was badly shaken herself, but the one to port—which was the steamer—had all her own guns trained to port, in the expectation that the *Wyoming* would keep to the main channel, and had not time to bring them round on the old-fashioned traversing carriages before the American was passing within pistol-shot on the other side. The shots from the latter struck all along her water-line, and finding she was sinking, the Japanese ship slipped her cable and steamed towards the beach; but the *Wyoming* meanwhile had passed round her bows, and turning back placed an 11-inch spherical shell in her boiler, which finished her.

By this time the sloop was suffering severely, nevertheless, from the fire of the guns on shore, having been hit a dozen times or more in the hull and at least as often in the rigging and masts; and as she was hopelessly out-matched in weight of metal by the batteries, she steamed out of range, after firing a few finishing rounds at the

two remaining Japanese vessels, one of which she left in a sinking condition. This ended a very gallant action, in which the *Wyoming* succeeded in sinking one enemy's ship and disabling another right under the guns of shore defences whose total armament was many times in excess of her own. The Chosiu men claimed that she was driven off, which was true, but not until she had inflicted losses on a superior force which were much heavier than she suffered herself; and, although the affair did not end in the defeat of the defenders, it did at least prove that they could not fire on the United States flag unless they were prepared for reprisals, even when the bulk of the United States Navy was engaged in dealing with trouble at home.

This action was fought on July 16, five days after that with the *Medusa*. On the same day Rear-Admiral Jaures, commanding the French naval forces in the East, left Yokohama in the 35-gun frigate *Semiramis*, with the gun-vessel *Tancrède* in company, to conduct reprisals for the firing on the French despatch-boat *Kienchang*. The frigate carried two companies of Colonial troops in addition to her own crew, with the intention of making a land attack, if possible, after a bombardment. The two ships approached the eastern end of the Straits by the Bungo Channel, as the *Wyoming* had done, but on rounding the point they followed a different plan of action; for whereas the short-range smooth-bore armament of the American had compelled her to attack at close range if she was to engage at all, the *Semiramis* carried rifled guns which could outrange anything on the Japanese side. They anchored, therefore, out of reach of the Chosiu guns, and the frigate began a bombardment of the easternmost battery, which was sustained for the whole forenoon without receiving any reply. The gun-vessel was then ordered to close and reconnoitre, and ascertained that, although the work under attack had evidently been abandoned, the batteries farther west were still held, for she drew their fire and was three times hit before retiring. The French admiral thereupon decided to make a reconnaissance on

land, and a force of 250 men was disembarked, under cover of the gun-vessel, near the outer flank of the battery which had been bombarded. This party encountered no signs of the enemy, and found the battery completely demolished, but, while they were engaged in destroying the magazines and barracks, the lookout on board the *Tancrède* observed a large body of Japanese troops approaching in the distance by the road which led from the town of Shimonoseki. Getting their exact range, the gun-vessel was able to keep them under fire with sufficient effect to prevent them from attacking the French party on shore until the demolitions were complete and the party back in the boats; but the possibility of being attacked in some force made it undesirable to conduct further operations on shore, and, although the remaining batteries might have been bombarded like the first, the French admiral decided that enough had been done in the way of reprisals to vindicate the honour of the French flag. He weighed the same evening accordingly and returned to Yokohama. There were no serious casualties on the French side.

The Chosiu clansmen had now been three times engaged with foreign war-vessels in the space of nine days, and had suffered the loss of one ship, the disablement of another, the complete demolition of a battery, and considerable damage to their remaining shore defences. Their casualties had also been heavy. But in spite of all this they were by no means subdued. Their fortifications were soon repaired, they had plenty of men left, and they could see that the Dutch and American ships had on their part suffered considerably also. The forbearance of the French in destroying only one battery they could not understand, and although the landing of an armed party on their territory impressed them a good deal, they regarded its eventual re-embarkation as a sign that the foreigners were only prepared to undertake minor attacks and not regular operations on an extensive scale. The Straits therefore remained unsafe to pass, and at the same time very distorted versions of these affairs were being

circulated through Japan and exciting the more restless anti-foreign elements. It had become obvious that nothing short of concerted action on strong lines, by all the foreign Powers with interests to guard in Japan, could restore a situation to the normal which was growing more threatening every day.

A period of ten months had now elapsed since the attack on the small riding-party of British subjects on the Yokohama road by the Satsuma retainers, which had caused the death of an Englishman, and the consequences of that act were nearing their fulfilment, although the procedure had been slow. On finding that he could secure no promise of the arrest of the murderers from any authority in Japan, the British Minister had reported the whole affair to the British Foreign Office, and awaited instructions, but this involved long delay because the nearest point from which telegrams could be sent to London was India, and in those days India was nearly a month by sea from Japan. It was not till the following year, therefore, that a reply was received. In this the British Minister was instructed to inform the Shogun that the British Government had heard with great regret of recent occurrences, and demanded at once a public apology from the Japanese authorities for the murder and insults of which their subjects had been guilty, and the payment of an indemnity of £100,000. If this was refused, the Shogun was to be given to understand that a sum amounting to millions might have to be exacted as an indemnity for the cost of operations which Great Britain might find it necessary to undertake to obtain justice. Furthermore he was to be notified that, as he himself had stated that he could not lay hands upon malefactors within the domains of the Satsuma clan to which the murderers belonged, a British naval expedition would proceed to a Satsuma port, and demand from the head of the clan the immediate trial and execution of the assassins, and the payment by the Satsuma treasury of the sum of £25,000 as an indemnity to the British subjects who had suffered by their actions.



When the British Minister received these instructions a still further delay was occasioned by the absence of the Shogun from Tokio, whence he had gone to visit the Mikado, and it was not till two months later that the public apology demanded by the British Government was tendered and the indemnity of £100,000 paid over. The anomalous and confused condition of the administration in Japan at this period was illustrated by the fact that the Mikado had issued peremptory orders that neither apology nor indemnity should be forthcoming, and yet the Shogun disregarded his master's instructions. But the Shogun and his officials were within range of British ships lying in Yokohama Bay, and well acquainted with the power that lay behind the British Minister, whereas the Court of the Mikado was not. Still more remarkable evidence of the complications attendant on the system of dual sovereignty was shortly forthcoming, for scarcely had the indemnity been paid and the apology made public—both contrary to the Imperial orders—than the Shogun notified all the foreign representatives that he proposed to act on an Imperial decree to remove every foreigner from Japan and close all the treaty ports. To this announcement the foreign diplomats sent a joint reply, in which they intimated to the Shogun that if any action of that kind was taken in violation of treaties, it would be equivalent to a declaration of war by Japan. The Shogun forwarded their communication to the Mikado and his notables at the Imperial Court, and while they were pondering its contents they received the news of certain proceedings taken by the British squadron in Japanese waters, which opened their eyes to their true position, and gave the Japanese authorities and territorial chiefs their first lesson for 260 years as to the power which a maritime State can exercise for the protection of its interests, and the vulnerability of an insular empire which fails to maintain a strong fleet.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BATTLES OF KAGOSIMA AND SHIMONOSEKI

It has already been observed that the British Foreign Office had notified the Shogun that a naval expedition would take direct action against the Satsuma clan to obtain the surrender of the murderers of a British subject and the payment by the clan of an indemnity of £25,000. The diplomatic incidents related at the close of the last chapter had caused the British Minister to postpone the immediate execution of this part of his instructions, but by the beginning of August he decided that it should no longer be delayed. On the sixth of that month, accordingly, the British ships-of-war at Yokohama sailed for the coast of the Satsuma province under Rear-Admiral Kuper. The squadron consisted of the frigate *Euryalus*, of 35 guns, flying his flag; the corvette *Pearl*; the sloop *Perseus*; the paddle-sloop *Argus*; and the gun-vessels *Racehorse*, *Coquette*, and *Havoc*. The British Minister himself was on board the flagship, and the immediate destination of the force was Kagosima Bay—a very large natural harbour on the southern coast of Kiushiu, where lay the town of that name, which was the capital of the Satsuma domains. The Bay, although deep in most parts, was at that time uncharted, which necessitated great caution in navigation and added materially to the responsibilities of the Admiral. Of the defences no details were known, but it was reported that the Satsuma batteries contained smooth-bore ordnance of fairly heavy calibre, and that they were manned by a well-trained force. The heaviest guns in the squadron were some 100-pounder Armstrongs in the flagship, and the majority of the vessels carried 8-inch or 64-pounders.

Kuper arrived off the mouth of Kagosima Bay late on

August 11, and after careful sounding and examination found a suitable depth and bottom for anchoring for the night, just inside the entrance. Early next morning a boat with Japanese officials came out to demand the reasons for his arrival, asking also what further movements he intended, and what number of guns the squadron carried. To these questions such replies were made as were considered expedient, and the squadron then weighed and steamed carefully up the Bay, until they were off the town, when they again anchored. Owing to the great depth of water farther out, it was necessary to berth somewhat close to the shore and within range of a

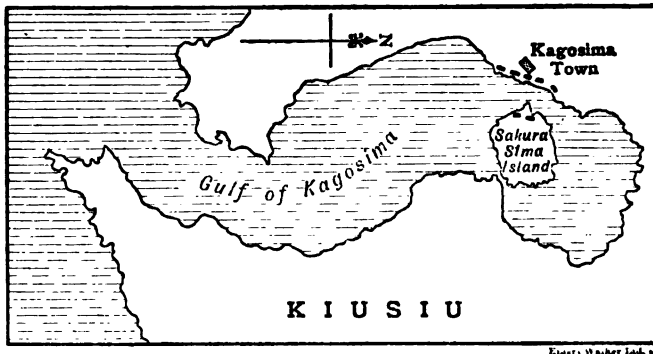


FIG. 3.—GULF OF KAGOSIMA.

Forts indicated thus ----

number of batteries, in which the men could easily be seen round the guns from the ships. Here another official boat came alongside to ask whether the squadron had any communication to make to the Prince of Satsuma, in whose harbour they lay; and her occupants were given a letter addressed to their chief, setting forth the demands of the British Government for the arrest and execution of the malefactors, and the payment of the indemnity specially imposed on their clan. It stated that if these demands did not receive compliance coercive measures would be adopted to obtain satisfaction. The officials on receiving this letter replied that the Prince was at a

place fifty miles distant, and insisted that the British Minister and the Admiral must go on shore to present their demands and discuss the whole matter with the council of the clan. They were informed that the British officers had nothing to add to what was contained in the letter and nothing to discuss; and in further parleyings and explanations the day passed, but the letter was eventually accepted for deliverance. Next morning the Satsuma Commander-in-Chief came alongside in a state barge, and requested not only to see the British Minister, but to bring his whole personal escort of forty armed men on board the *Euryalus* with him. This request was granted, but to prevent any possibility of trouble the marines of the flagship were first drawn up across the quarter-deck, and when the Japanese escort stepped over the gangway they found themselves faced by a line of fixed bayonets, beyond which only their commander and another officer were allowed to pass. It transpired afterwards that the escort was chiefly composed of young men of good family and adventurous disposition who hoped to distinguish themselves in their countrymen's eyes by killing the Minister and Admiral if they saw the chance. The Commander-in-Chief brought a reply to the British ultimatum of an evasive and indefinite nature, pleading great difficulty in tracing the murderers, and alleging that at the time of the assault it was believed by the assailants that the English party were outside the area permitted by treaty for foreigners, as the Shogun had not made its limits properly clear. He suggested that the whole matter should be discussed with the Shogun, and that the squadron should withdraw. After a long debate he was informed that no excuses or suggestions could be entertained, and went on shore again.

As the squadron had now been nearly forty-eight hours in the Bay, and there were no signs of any acceptance of the demands of the British Government, the Minister requested the Admiral in the evening to take charge of the situation and commence forcible measures. Kuper's plan of action was to begin by seizing three steamers

belonging to the Prince of Satsuma, which the latter had purchased not long before, and which were now lying at an anchorage to the northward of the town, where they were not covered by the batteries. But it was too late to take steps in the matter before dark, especially as a complication of a somewhat serious nature threatened to intervene, for it looked as if the elements were coming to the assistance of the Japanese just as they did in the days of Kublai Khan. Being the middle of August, it was the height of the typhoon season, and before night-fall the barometer had begun to fall very rapidly. Under ordinary circumstances the ships of the British squadron had less reason to fear a typhoon than the armada of the Mongols, and, given sufficient sea-room, even the smallest could hope to weather any but the very worst by lying-to, or by riding it out at anchor, if in a sufficiently sheltered harbour with good holding ground. But Kuper's ships would have had no sea-room if the wind blew onshore instead of offshore, and as the coast was unsurveyed he did not know where good holding ground existed. Fortunately for him, the large island of Sakarajima lies in the middle of the Bay, and under the lee of this he could always hope for some shelter from wind in whatever quarter. Like other admirals before him, he found the exigencies of war complicated by the requirements of seamanship, but the political situation called for urgent attention, and he knew that if for any reason whatever he withdrew from Kagosima with the British demands unsatisfied, the moral effect would be very bad. He accepted the weather as he found it, therefore, but with all the seamanlike precautions necessary to the occasion.

At daybreak the signs had become very threatening, but he ordered three ships to get under way to seize the steamers and tow them to the squadron's anchorage. This step inflicted a pecuniary loss on the Satsuma chief of nearly three times the indemnity demanded, for the vessels had cost him between sixty and seventy thousand pounds to purchase. The operation was carried out in full view of the town and batteries, but it took some hours

to complete, as the prizes had no steam up themselves, and, by the time they were in tow alongside their captors, the first blasts of the coming typhoon had begun to sweep across the Bay and render towage difficult. The remainder of the squadron were getting under way to seek better shelter, when the Japanese precipitated matters by suddenly opening fire from every gun that they could bring to bear. They admitted afterwards that they thought that the violence of the gale would seriously affect the fighting capacity of the squadron, and that the moment was opportune to take the initiative as a retaliation for the seizure of their steamers. Kuper, finding that he now had to fight, but could not engage properly with the captured vessels in tow, made a signal to set them on fire and cast them off, which was accordingly done, and all three were destroyed. Having completed this operation, he cleared for action and struck topgallant masts, as it was now blowing furiously; then formed line with the flagship leading, and steaming to the northward of the defences, turned in succession and passed the whole of the batteries, engaging each in turn at ranges of from 400 to 800 yards down the entire front. It was a short but sharp affair. The Japanese returned the fire with great spirit, and, although outmatched in weight of metal, had the advantage of steady gun platforms, whereas, in spite of the close range, accurate firing was difficult from the rolling ships, whose decks were being washed down fore and aft by the heavy seas. Unfortunately the thickly populated commercial quarter of the town lay behind some of the defences, and received all the "overs," from which it was soon in flames. Of the general effect of the firing the admiral reported thus in his despatch:

"It was impossible to ascertain precisely the extent of the injury inflicted upon the batteries; but considering the heavy fire which was kept up from the ships, at point-blank range, the effect must have been considerable. Many guns were observed to be dismounted, the batteries were several times cleared, and the explosion of magazines

gave evidence of the destructive effects of our shell; one half of the town was in flames and entirely destroyed, as well as a very extensive arsenal or factory and gun foundry, and five large Loo-Choo junks, the property of the Prince, in addition to the three steamers already described. A heavy typhoon blew during the night, and the conflagration, increasing in proportion to the height of the storm, illuminated the entire Bay."

The injury was by no means all on one side, however, for the Japanese stuck to their guns courageously, in spite of the overwhelming fire to which they were subjected, and, as the fighting was at very close quarters, the inferior ranging power of their guns was not the disadvantage it might otherwise have been. Many of their shots took effect, and although no ship was actually disabled several were a good deal knocked about, and the squadron suffered sixty-three casualties, Captain Josling and Commander Wilmot, of the flagship, both being killed by the same shot passing over the bridge, from which Kuper himself had a narrow escape.

By the time that the southernmost battery had been passed and engaged, the full force of the typhoon had developed, and as night was coming on the Admiral had no alternative but to break off the action and seek shelter under Sakarajima, opposite the north side of which he anchored just before dusk, in a position which not only gave a lee from the storm, but was out of range of any Japanese guns which could bear on it. Defences existed on the island itself, but only on the western side, covering the channel between the island and the town, and none of these faced the area where Kuper berthed his ships. The Japanese have sometimes claimed that the engagement was a draw, because, although its discontinuance was necessitated by the violence of the gale, several of the batteries were still unsilenced when the squadron ceased firing and retired. But it was never the Admiral's intention to annihilate. His object was to make it clear to the Satsuma leaders that rejection of the British demands would involve them in more serious consequences

than acceptance; and in this he was quite successful. The indemnity for which he had asked was a very moderate sum, easily within the power of the Satsuma Treasury to pay; but the damage inflicted by the British shells amounted to hundreds of thousands if not millions sterling; and in the end the indemnity had to be paid to save yet further loss. Similarly the price forfeited in Satsuma lives to save three or four assassins from justice was a very heavy one, although its full tale was never divulged.

Moreover, Kuper had not quite finished. All through the night the typhoon raged from various quarters and fanned the flames of the burning city, till the flare was visible throughout the extensive territories of the clan, and in some directions far beyond, but the shifts of wind did not come from points of the compass which threatened the British ships, and by daybreak its force had begun to abate. At noon the wind had died down sufficiently for the squadron to weigh and resume operations. As the town and its vicinity were covered by a dense pall of smoke from the smouldering ruins, and the batteries before it appeared to be deserted, Kuper turned his attention to the defences on Sakarajima, and steamed down the channel between the island and the west side of the Bay, which they overlooked. These batteries were inferior in armament to those attacked the day before, and, as they made no effective reply, they were soon demolished. With this the British Minister considered that adequate reprisals had been completed, and the "Cease fire" signal was made. Kuper then anchored off the south end of the island to repair the damages sustained in action, which occupied his ships for about a week; after which, being again ready for sea and with their mission completed, they sailed for Yokohama, where they arrived on August 24.

Although the forces engaged were inconsiderable, and the matters at issue of comparatively minor consequence from a material standpoint, and although the fire of the British guns was only directed against the adherents of a single clan, there is no doubt whatever that the Battle



of Kagosima was a very important event in the history of Japan. The Satsuma occupied a prominent place in the general estimation of the Japanese people, and the consequences of the British attack made a proportionate impression. The engagements that had taken place a few weeks previously between foreign vessels and the Chosiu batteries had been only small-scale affairs at most, which had left the general position much as it was before. But at Kagosima a whole squadron had attacked, with a result which was a revelation to all Japan, and most of all to the Satsuma leaders themselves. This cannot be better indicated than by quoting from Adams's "History of Japan," which in reference to the incident remarks as follows:

"One thing is certain and is acknowledged by every Satsuma man—namely, whatever was the true account of the action, the bombardment of Kagosima was the turning-point as far as that powerful clan was concerned. It was then that the men belonging to the military class in Satsuma first became convinced that Japan was not the strongest country in the world, and that there were other nations more powerful and more civilized. It was from that time that they began to cease to look down upon foreigners with contempt, and henceforward their principality began, as they expressed it, to be 'opened.' They subsequently took the lead in introducing European machinery and inventions and in employing skilled Europeans to teach them, and they became fired with a desire to rival foreign nations in the arts of civilization and peace as well as the art of war."

Furthermore, it was significant that this proof of Japanese weakness, when confronted with the armed forces of a European Power, was the outcome of a dispute with the nation which in due course was to be the first with which Japan ever entered into a formal defensive alliance. It was the maritime and commercial supremacy of Great Britain which led to both. In 1863 British trade in the treaty ports so much predominated over that under other flags, that the British subjects in Japan were more numerous than those of all the other foreign nationalities put together; and it was due to their preponderating

numbers that the first foreigners whom the Satsuma retainers encountered on the Yokohama road, and attacked with murderous intent, were Englishmen. Just forty years later, it was the sea power of Great Britain that offered Japan the inducement to enter into definite relationship for mutual defence with the British Government, which has continued to exist, with certain modifications, ever since.

It was in many respects a fortunate thing that the conflict did not arise in connection with matters of commercial or purely material importance, but from British insistence on the vindication of a principle affecting national rights. In their traditional attitude towards war and its proper causes, the Japanese are very much influenced by ideals, and can fully appreciate action undertaken to uphold a point of national honour, even when it entails sacrifices far in excess of those which would be involved in surrender. The Satsuma leaders were themselves inspired by such motives when they preferred to accept battle rather than give up three or four of their retainers, or pay an indemnity which lay easily within their means; and the Japanese had been previously inclined to take the view, perhaps not altogether without reason, that the Western nations were never moved by any considerations but those of a purely commercial or material character. It was a wholesome corrective to this idea to demonstrate that a European Power attached so much importance to the life of even one of its subjects as to be prepared to risk the lives of a good many more to avenge it when improperly taken; and, although it is to the United States that the credit is due for first bringing Japan to realize that no nation in modern times can remain permanently dissociated from all the rest of the world—least of all a nation of islanders—it was the destiny of Great Britain to prove to the Mikado and his people that Western States are sometimes actuated by other motives than that of mere material gain, and may on occasion face risks and losses for the sake of performing what they consider their duty towards civilized principles and national self-respect.

And it was because Great Britain employed the far-reaching arm of sea power to demonstrate this fact to Japan that the Japanese themselves for the first time began to appreciate what sea power could effect. As a consequence, one of the very first acts of the Satsuma clan after the engagement was to endeavour to lay the foundations of a fleet of their own through the good offices of the very Government they had been fighting against. They realized that even if the shore defences at Kagosima had been strong enough to drive off Kuper's ships, the latter could have attacked at some undefended part of their long coastline, or seized all their coasting trade with ease, and that nothing but the highly mobile defence represented by a squadron of their own could protect them against such a danger. And, as the British ships were obviously extremely efficient, they decided to seek efficiency from the same source, under circumstances which shed an instructive and creditable light on the Japanese national character, exhibiting as they do a frank acceptance of defeat, coupled with an absence of any trace of animosity towards their vanquishers. Two months after the British squadron had disappeared round the eastern headlands of the Bay of Kagosima, the British Minister wrote to the Shogun, requesting him once again to draw the attention of the Prince of Satsuma to the fact that the indemnity was still unpaid and the murderers still at large. This came as an unpleasant surprise to the Prince and his leaders, who thought that the departure of Kuper and his ships had ended the matter; but they had no desire for another visit, and in due course two Satsuma officials presented themselves at the British Legation, with the money in bullion and a written pledge to take all possible steps to trace the culprits. They asked at the same time that, as a token of the re-establishment of peaceful and friendly relations, the British Minister would represent to his Government the desire of their chief to purchase a war-vessel in England, which the Minister promised to do, and in his despatch referred to the "good-humour" which had marked the proceedings.

But although August 14, 1863, was a notable date in Japanese annals for the reasons given above, it only marked a first step, and others were necessary to extend the impressions then created. The decisive effect produced on the attitude of the Satsuma clan by British guns did not immediately produce a similar result on the Prince of Chosiu, whose main defences were still intact, in spite of three engagements with foreigners, and whose object of closing the Straits of Shimonoseki had been attained in spite of the attacks to which he had been subjected as protests. Traffic had ceased to use the Straits altogether, and suffered the inconvenience, delay, and expense entailed in following the longer sea route, rather than face the risks attendant upon the shorter. Accordingly, after the reprisals conducted by the French Admiral the foreign Ministers agreed that the conditions prevailing had become such that it was necessary to take concerted action for the protection of the common interests, and resolved to work by mutual arrangement in all measures for opening the Straits, whether by force or negotiation. They decided in the first place to present a joint demand that the Japanese Government should immediately dismantle the Chosiu batteries and punish the Chosiu Prince, and in the letter addressed to the Shogun in which this demand was conveyed the following passages occurred:

“The outrages and insults which the Prince of Chosiu has ventured to undertake by firing into the ships-of-war of France, the United States, and the Netherlands is looked upon as an attempt to carry out the edicts of the Mikado, communicated through the Shogun, for the expulsion of foreigners.

“This will be resisted by a force the extent of which cannot at present be contemplated.

“No reasonable man in Japan can doubt as to what must be, even in one year, the fate of this country if the outrageous and lawless attempt to cancel solemn treaties by treacherous and violent acts is not immediately abandoned. But if there are nobles in Japan who do not understand that the solemn obligations imposed by

treaties cannot and never have been set aside by violence in any part of the world, the whole people of the country will suffer by the ignorance of these nobles.

"The Shogun's officials have informed the French Minister that they are able to punish leaders who commit acts of war or other outrageous deeds. If so, let the Government with all speed destroy the batteries of the Prince of Chosiu and remove his guns."

This protest, together with the moral effect of the attack on Kagosima, produced a confused and complicated political situation in Japan. In the first place, the complete defeat of the Satsuma forces made it abundantly clear at last to the anti-foreign Mikado and his supporters that the expulsion of the foreigners was not likely to be so easily accomplished as they had expected. The Shogun and his party had been aware of that all the time, but in view of the steadily growing power of the Mikado had feared to lose influence by not appearing to agree with his policy. But the latter had no intention of abandoning the idea, even after Kuper's squadron had shown up matters for the first time in their true light. His notion now was to meet force by force, waiting until Japan was strong enough for the purpose, which in his ignorance he believed would only require a delay of a very few years at most. He instructed the Shogun accordingly to purchase war-vessels in Europe as expeditiously as possible, and erect fortifications at all important points on the coast; and as the Prince of Chosiu's obstinacy in keeping the Straits closed was likely to precipitate trouble before Japan was ready, he openly repudiated the proceedings of that chief, and banished his clan from representation or attendance at the Imperial Court. But as no steps were taken to disarm his batteries the Prince remained truculent, not only to foreigners but to the Mikado himself. In point of fact he had some reasonable cause of complaint against his treatment by the latter, for there is no doubt that in firing on foreign vessels he was acting directly in accordance with the Mikado's first policy of expelling foreigners forthwith, as communi-

cated to him by an Imperial order. By degrees all the anti-foreign malcontents in the Empire came to regard him as their proper leader, and flocked to his domains; and as his followers increased in this way so did his attitude become more and more insubordinate. His chief animosity was directed against the Shogun, whom he regarded as a tool of the foreign diplomatists; but his resentment against the Mikado, to whom he had previously been very loyal, was now almost equally strong, and before long led him to rash proceedings. As an evidence of his intention to act independently of both, he fired on one of the Shogun's steamers while she was passing through the Straits, and sank her with considerable loss of life.

This chaotic and uncertain condition of affairs lasted all through the winter, and the foreign representatives could get no attention paid to their demands for the demolition of the Shimonoseki batteries. The Mikado would not go so far as to absolutely weaken the defences anywhere in Japan, and the Shogun—with whom alone the foreigners had direct intercourse—was conscious of his waning authority and not in a position to take a strong line against any powerful recalcitrant. He even went so far in the other direction as to propose to the foreign Ministers the closing of Yokohama as a treaty port, ostensibly on the grounds that their official presence was fomenting a constantly increasing unrest among the local population, but in reality as a pretence to the Mikado that he was in sympathy with the Imperial policy. The diplomatists saw through his schemes and peremptorily rejected the proposal; but their position was becoming more difficult every day, partly on account of the confused condition of all administrative authority in Japan, and partly because the Shogun was going behind their backs and had despatched a mission to Europe, hoping to obtain the agreement of the Powers to the closing of Yokohama in that way. They realized that, although the Shogun was outwardly making an appearance of goodwill, he was in reality finding that his only chance of remaining in power was to act secretly in accordance with the wishes

of the ever-growing Imperial party in developing Japanese armaments with a view to their ultimate use against foreigners. In accordance with this temporizing policy, he deprecated strongly any direct action on the part of the foreign fleets against Chosiu, and assured the foreign representatives that the clan would be called to account, in due course, for their outrages to foreign flags, and also for disregard of Imperial orders.

But nothing happened to indicate that this was other than an empty promise. Winter passed amid a fruitless exchange of diplomatic protests and arguments, which it would be tedious to recapitulate here, and meanwhile batteries were being erected at various points covering the anchorage of the foreign fleets in Yokohama Bay. A state of affairs had been reached in which, to quote Adams, "the Treaty Powers seemed to be reduced to one of three alternatives: to accept the actual position, to withdraw altogether from Japan, or to maintain treaty rights in integrity by force of arms." A new British Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, had arrived, and when a period of ten months had elapsed since the joint protest of the foreign legations had been handed in to the Shogun, his patience came to an end, and he proposed to his colleagues of France, Holland, and the United States that the measures which had proved so eminently successful at Kagosima should be repeated at Shimonoseki. This proposal received their full concurrence, and notes in identical and forcible terms were despatched simultaneously to the Shogun from each legation on May 30, pointing out that, in spite of promises on his part to deal with the Chosiu Prince, nothing had been done, and repeating the warnings against further procrastination; which, however, had been so frequently addressed to him for months previously by the individual Ministers, that he had come to regard them as having no real meaning. For several weeks these fresh notes remained unanswered, and then a reply was received at each legation, in which the Shogun expressed his surprise at the strong language used by the diplomatists and protested that in the existing

condition of feeling in Japan in regard to foreigners, "hasty" or forcible measures might lead to very disturbing and disastrous results. On receipt of this answer, the Ministers replied that unless within a period of twenty days satisfactory redress was forthcoming, they would themselves take such action as they considered necessary; but before proceeding to extremes they made a last effort to preserve the peace by a direct approach to the Prince of Chosiu himself. Two young *Samurai* of good family belonging to that clan—Ito and Inouye by name—had been sent to England three years before to be educated, and had been so much impressed by the evidences of British power which met their eyes, that on hearing of the uncompromising attitude taken up by their chief towards foreigners, they had hastened back to Japan to warn him of the impossibility of maintaining it. They offered their services to the British Minister, and at his request were given a passage from Yokohama to Shimonoseki in a British corvette, which was ordered to land them outside range of the batteries. The Chosiu Prince received them, but as he was now committed to a definite policy of forcible opposition, not only to the foreigners but to the Japanese Government, their mission was productive of no results. He sent, nevertheless, a verbal message back by them to the British Minister to say that he was acting under written orders from the Mikado in closing the Straits, and offering to obtain the Imperial sanction to open them if they would wait for three months.

When the twenty days of grace had expired, the British, French, Dutch, and United States Ministers simultaneously requested the officers commanding the naval forces under their respective flags in Japanese waters "to proceed with all convenient speed to open the Straits of Shimonoseki, destroying and disarming the batteries of the Prince of Chosiu, and otherwise crippling him in all his means of attack." The officers were further informed that "the political situation rendered it desirable that there should be no considerable delay in the commencement of the operations"—a perfectly superfluous intima-



tion to admirals who had been ready and anxious to act for a whole year, during which period all the delay in taking steps to deal with an impossible situation had been due to the disinclination of the diplomats to grasp it with a firm hand. If the example of the prompt measures taken by the *Wyoming* and *Semiramis* to conduct reprisals for insults to the American and French flags afloat—a point in which the naval officers could act without the diplomatists—had been followed by an equal promptness on the part of the legations to insist upon the observation of the treaty whereby the Straits were free to navigation, an entire year of delay and loss to trade would have been avoided, and the satisfactory results obtained by the ultimate resort to a strong line of action would have been procured proportionately earlier. But dilatory though the diplomatic body had been, the British Minister had at least the excuse that he was ahead of the British Foreign Office, for, after the events which followed, he was actually recalled to England to account for his *precipitate* action, although his explanation was in the end deemed to be adequate.

As soon as they received the diplomats' request to take the matter in hand, the British and French admirals, and the Dutch and American captains, who were the seniors in their own services present, held a council to decide upon a combined plan of attack, and on August 17 the various squadrons, comprising altogether seventeen vessels, sailed from Yokohama in execution of their mission. The British force consisted of the frigate *Euryalus*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Kuper; the line-of-battle ship *Conqueror* with a battalion of marines on board, sent out from home as a guard for the British community; the corvettes *Tartar*, *Leopard*, and *Barrosa*; the sloops *Perseus* and *Argus*; and the gunboats *Coquette* and *Bouncer*. The French vessels were the frigate *Semiramis*, the corvette *Dupleix*, and the gunboat *Tancrède*; the Dutch, the corvettes *Medusa*, *Metalen Kruis*, and *D'Jambi*, and the paddle-sloop *Amsterdam*; and the American, the chartered steamer *Takiang*,

mounting only one gun. Leaving Yokohama independently, they first made for a general rendezvous at the Island of Himeshima in the Inland Sea, where all had arrived by September 3. That same day the squadrons weighed and steered in company towards the eastern entrance of the Straits of Shimonoseki, in the approaches to which they anchored the same afternoon, beyond range of the batteries; and the following morning was spent in a final reconnaissance, after which orders were issued for the plan of attack. The batteries were ten in all, but the two farthest to the westward, numbered 9 and 10 in the plan, lay at some distance from the remainder, and were not to be included in the first day's objective. The main defences were numbered 3 to 8, while numbers 1 and 2 were minor works on the eastern flank. A whole day was to be devoted, if necessary, to bombardment, and if the defences had then been silenced, the next was to be occupied in a general landing, to complete the work of demolition and remove the guns if possible. The six corvettes *Tartar*, *Leopard*, *Barrosa*, *Metalen Kruis*, *D'Jambi*, and *Dupleix* were to deliver a close frontal attack on the six batteries of the central group. The *Euryalus* and *Semiramis* were to engage the same at long range with their heavy rifled guns, being unable to move close in on account of their draught of water; while the *Perseus* and *Medusa*, with the gunboats *Coquette*, *Bouncer*, and *Tancrède*, were to engage batteries 1 and 2 and maintain a raking fire on the central group. The paddle-sloops *Amsterdam* and *Argus* and the American steamer *Takiang* were to remain under way, in readiness to tow or support any vessel in difficulties, but to open fire on any targets on which they could range; but the line-of-battle ship *Conqueror* was compelled to keep out of action, except at extreme range with her 100-pounder Armstrongs, on account of her size and heavy draught. It was decided that the attack was to take place on an east-running tidal stream, so that any vessel disabled or forced to withdraw should not be carried up the Straits into difficult pilotage.

The tide served at 2 p.m., before which time the whole

fleet was under way, and at that hour the *Euryalus* made the signal to engage. The vessels thereupon steamed in at full speed to their allotted positions for attack, opening fire as they took them up, which the forts returned at once, and very soon every gun afloat and ashore that could bear or range on an enemy was in action. All through the afternoon the roar of the bombardment sounded through the Straits and far across the Chosiu territories, and by its volume of sound caused great excitement among the population even many miles inland. The Chosiu clansmen made a courageous and determined defence, but their weapons were no match for European armaments, and one after another their batteries were knocked out, till by 5.30 p.m. the last Japanese gun was silenced and the ships ceased fire. After conferring together the admirals considered that the defences had been sufficiently damaged to render further bombardment unnecessary, and decided that the general landing should take place next day, in accordance with programme. All ships therefore anchored for the night, but, as a precaution, kept ready for emergency. It was well for them that they did, for at dawn the defenders proved their determined spirit by opening fire again from the one battery still in a condition to fight, and did considerable damage to the *Tartar* and *Dupleix*, lying close in front of it, before the concentrated return fire of the inshore vessels reduced the battery to dust. When this had been accomplished the *Euryalus* made the landing signal, and 1,500 British, 350 French, and 200 Dutch seamen and marines were soon in the boats of the squadron making for prearranged points on shore, in tow of the sloops and gunboats, under cover of the guns of the larger ships. Arrived at their proper positions, they landed, formed up, and, under the personal direction of Kuper himself, advanced on the batteries, which were found deserted and partly in ruins. A strong covering force was then posted, and demolition parties set to work to dismount the guns, burn the carriages, and blow up the magazines. But this process suffered some interference

from the fire of a large body of Chosiu troops in a stockade and a wooded valley in rear of the main position, and it was necessary to drive them out, which operation caused some loss to the British landing party. It was not till nightfall, therefore, that the demolitions were sufficiently complete for the whole force to return to the ships.

The two days' programme of attack had now been carried out in accordance with plan, and it was decided that the crews should rest on the third, partly to give the Chosiu chief an opportunity of submission should he desire it. But as he made no sign, and as the two remoter westernmost batteries were still unattacked, on the morning of the fourth the *Tartar*, *Dupleix*, *Metalen Kruis*, and *D'Jambi* were sent up the Straits to engage them. The batteries offered no return fire, however, and before long it transpired that a general surrender was imminent, for in the course of the morning an envoy under a flag of truce came on board the *Euryalus*, to ask for a termination of hostilities, and to declare that no opposition would thenceforward be offered to the free passage of the Straits. The envoy, in proof of the Prince's claim that he had been acting under Imperial orders, produced the Mikado's written instructions to expel the foreigners. His submissive attitude was now possibly caused, in part, by the remarkable circumstances that only three weeks previously he had despatched his whole troops to attack the capital and seize the Mikado, but had suffered decisive defeat by the forces of the Shogun. The chaotic political situation had, in fact, produced the extraordinary result that the strongly anti-foreign Mikado was being actively assisted to quell a vassal by the foreigners. His Majesty wished to expel, because that vassal was carrying out orders that the Mikado had issued himself not long before.

When the active operations were complete, large parties were landed from the ships to remove the armaments of the forts. This arduous task occupied three days, but the surrender of the Chosiu Prince ensured that it should proceed without opposition on his part, and sixty-two Japanese guns were eventually put into the boats of the

fleet and taken on board, leaving the whole position incapable of inflicting further injury on passing traffic. The object of the expedition being thus completely achieved, and the senior officer of each nationality provided with a full written assurance from the Chosiu chief that the Straits would remain free as far as he was concerned, the various squadrons separated and returned independently to Yokohama. The total casualties in the combined squadrons were only seventy-two in killed and wounded, and, thanks to their superior weight of armament, the fire of the defence had been so effectively dominated that the only ships to suffer considerable damage were the *Tartar* and the *Dupleix*, which had occupied positions during the attack exposing them to a somewhat concentrated attention from the batteries. About a fortnight later a conference was held by the foreign diplomats to settle the extent of the indemnity which they had warned the Shogun would be demanded in the event of finding it necessary to open the Straits by force. Representatives of the Shogun attended the conference by invitation, and accepted the decisions at which it arrived. The Prince of Chosiu, having agreed in a previous document of surrender to pay all the expenses of the expedition, in addition to a ransom for the town of Shimonoseki from attack, was fined three million dollars, which the Shogun undertook to pay from the Imperial Treasury, and recover under his own arrangements from the Prince.

Thus ended a difficult situation in a manner which was ultimately to the advantage of all concerned, and not least to those who for the moment seemed to suffer by its terminating in such a way. For fifteen months the Chosiu clan had kept the Straits closed in defiance of all warnings, and, besides offering violence to vessels under several foreign flags, had inflicted direct loss on all foreign trade by forcing it to take a longer route, and indirect loss by keeping alive a condition of uncertainty as to the whole policy of the Japanese authorities, whose neglect to disarm the Shimonoseki batteries suggested sympathy with the

attitude of the Chosiu Prince. But all that was now at an end, and again to quote Adams:

“As after the affair of Kagosima, so it was after that of Shimonoseki. As the former opened the eyes of the Satsuma clan to the superior power of foreigners, and turned their hostility into overtures of friendship, so it was now with the Chosiu clan, and thus two of the most determined enemies of foreign intercourse were won over to our side. The loss of life was inconsiderable, and it is at least probable that the striking of this blow not only at once avoided more serious complications, but also a greater loss of life in the future. It was necessary, unless we were determined to be continually harassed and to suffer our trade to be exposed to serious interruptions, that the warlike but ignorant clans should be taught their inferiority in war. Nothing less than actual experience would have convinced them, and they were acute enough to perceive and profit by that experience.”

But although the moral effect was somewhat similar in degree in both cases, the material results were much more important at Shimonoseki than at Kagosima. As the latter was not a treaty port and did not command any trade route useful to foreign vessels, the destruction of its defences was no advantage to foreign commercial interests. But at Shimonoseki it was quite otherwise, and as soon as the Straits were reopened and the Inland Sea route made safe once more, trade revived and increased. The bombardment of Kagosima was an act of justice, undertaken by a solitary Power for the maintenance of respect for its subjects, and to inflict just retribution for murder. But the attack on Shimonoseki was the work of a coalition of civilized States whose object was the enforcement of treaties with purely material ends in view, and it was ultimately the Japanese who benefited more than any other people by their enforcement, although at the time they were too ignorant to foresee that result.

Among its other consequences, it proved to be an indirect step in re-establishing the ancient power of the Mikado himself. One of the first acts of the foreign diplomats, after the Chosius' submission, was to insist upon the

recognition of foreign treaties by the Mikado in person, instead of leaving them entirely in the hands of a subordinate such as the Shogun, even though the whole administration of Japan was conducted by the latter. This was a very great change from every point of view. According to Adams—

“It was becoming manifest that the existence of these two centres of authority was at the bottom of most of the complications which had arisen in respect of foreign relations, and it was high time that the Shogun should be made aware that the Representatives would have to insist upon a recognition of the treaties by the Emperor, in order that future difficulties might be avoided, and that the relations with foreigners might be placed upon a more satisfactory and durable basis.”

The foreign Ministers accordingly addressed a letter to the Shogun in which the following passages occurred:

“The experience of the last few years has abundantly manifested that there exists a want of accord on the subject of foreign relations between the Mikado and the Shogun. . . . The Mikado, requiring the abrogation of treaties, had reduced the Shogun to the alternative of either disobeying his legitimate Sovereign or bringing on his country all the calamities of a war against four of the greatest Powers of the West. For to annul the treaties entered into with them without their consent is to declare war.

“The Shogun, desiring to avoid both these fatal contingencies, has hitherto sought a solution of the difficulty by half-measures, equally distasteful to the Mikado and the foreign Powers. Hence the Treaty Powers have replied by the despatch of forces adequate to the destruction of the batteries and defences of the Prince of Chosiu.

“The Mikado can no longer be under any illusion, therefore. If he continues to desire the abrogation of the treaties, he must also desire war. It is for the Shogun, who knows all the dangers of the situation, to anticipate and prevent the fatal consequences. The time for half-measures has passed irrevocably. The four great Powers having material interests in Japan can no longer suffer their own dignity and the interests of their subjects

to be continually called in question. A solution of the difficulty has become indispensable, and the only one that promises either peace or serenity is the ratification of the treaties of the Mikado."

This communication at first only produced the usual evasive promises of ultimate attention, and the usual protest that no steps were immediately possible to lay the matter before the Imperial Court. But other influences were forcing the Shogun's hand. Since their experiences at Kagosima and Shimonoseki the Satsuma and Chosiu clans had definitely abandoned an anti-foreign policy, in the belief that it was impossible to carry out. In that respect they had arrived at the same opinion as the Shogun himself, although it was at variance with the views of the Mikado, who still adhered obstinately to the hope that in time the foreigners might be expelled. But these clans were always very jealous of the Shogun's power, and the latter began to fear that they would succeed in obtaining foreign support in their ambition to deprive him of his authority if he did not display some clear proof that he was acting as the foreigners desired. Not long after receiving the above-quoted joint letter from the diplomats, therefore, he acquainted them that he had informed the Mikado that in his opinion a time had arrived in which it had become necessary for the Imperial signature to be appended to all the already existing treaties for regulating the intercourse between Japan and other countries.

This was early in 1865, and a strong international squadron had recently anchored at Kobe, the port which lay nearest to the Mikado's capital of Kioto. At first the Mikado utterly refused to agree to any such revolutionary proposal as would involve his sacred person in direct dealings with aliens from other lands. But the Shogun thereupon threatened to resign office, and presented a final appeal which is translated thus by Adams:

"We have adopted the practice of mutually enriching and strengthening both ourselves and others by the exchange of what we produce for what they produce.



and this seems to me a natural and necessary law. For Japan to stand alone among the nations in refusing intercourse with all the others appears to indicate timidity and is detrimental to our power and dignity. A few years ago we concluded a treaty with the United States of which Your Majesty approved, and from that time we have been abandoning old-fashioned ideas and becoming powerful and wealthy. I have especially made it my endeavour to learn from the foreigners in matters in which they excelled, and to obtain ships and guns such as theirs from the profits of trade. The foreigners have now come to Kobe, close to Your Majesty's city of residence, with a strong fleet to request a further extension of these treaties, but Your Majesty wishes to break off all foreign relations and expel the foreigners. I have used every argument with their diplomatists, but they refuse to remain content, and if they cannot get what they want will force their way to your palace.

"To provoke war in our unprepared state would be very dangerous, and even if we were victorious for a time a land such as ours, which is entirely surrounded by the sea, would be constantly exposed to attacks on every quarter, involving a continual state of war and great misery. . . ."

The concluding sentence of this appeal affords a significant indication that the better-informed Japanese had at length realized Japan's weakness as an insular State. Long accustomed to regard the sea as a protection, they now understood that it had become a source of danger, and that through the facilities for approach which it offered to potential enemies it exposed their country to the risk of attack in a far greater degree than a continental realm. This awakening to the truth had a most important effect on the subsequent policy of Japan, but its full meaning had not yet dawned on the Mikado himself. He did, indeed, reluctantly assent to signing the treaties under the Shogun's threat of resignation, for he was afraid of the power of the turbulent western clans, and had neither the experience nor the knowledge to undertake the defence and administration of his Empire himself; but he obstinately refused, nevertheless, to make any further concessions to foreign proposals. At the same

time the foreign diplomats felt that a great step in advance had been taken when they saw the Imperial signature for the first time on documents which displayed their own, and believed with confidence that they could afford to wait for further developments. It was an unheard-of thing in Japan for a Mikado to take a personal part in official dealings with the subjects of alien races, whom the majority of his people still regarded with contempt and aversion, and the foreign Ministers did not consider it expedient to press for immediate further concessions. They knew, moreover, that the most powerful anti-foreign influences at the Mikado's Court had been removed by the conversion of the Satsuma and Chosiu chiefs to a favourable attitude towards foreign intercourse, and also that the severe defeats suffered by these powerful clans had caused a profound sensation throughout the country. For the time, therefore, they were content to let matters rest.

Nor had they long to wait, for in little more than a year the Mikado died. His successor, the Emperor Mutsuhito, was a lad of only fifteen, and, as such, little likely to exercise much influence on the proceedings of the Shogun, even if as unfavourably disposed towards the foreigners as his predecessor had been. At a later period, when in due course he attained to full power, he proved to be as progressive and enlightened as the old Mikado had been the reverse, thus becoming one of the most important figures in Japanese history; but for the time he was a negligible factor. The old Shogun had also died not long before, but his decease did not greatly affect the situation, because his successors continued his policy. Some difficulty had, indeed, been experienced by the clan to which he belonged in getting any member of the chief family to take the Shogunate, which was fast losing its great pre-eminence and involving the holder of the office in heavy labours without any compensations. Eventually, however, a relative of the old Shogun accepted the vacant position, but although an able man, his period of authority proved to be brief,

and he was the last holder of the uncrowned dictatorship of Japan. For a period of about a year he acted as a chief of administration, and then, at the suggestion of the entire nobility of Japan, surrendered his authority to the Emperor. His office was abolished and his executive power vested in an elected council of clan chiefs and *Samurai*, with a Cabinet appointed by the Sovereign. An Imperial army was also established on a permanent footing, to which all the principal clans were ordered to supply a specified quota of troops.

For a brief period, however, circumstances arose which seemed to suggest that this momentous change had only come into existence to be abolished again. The ex-Shogun was led to believe by some of his clansmen very shortly after his resignation that the power he had surrendered was really passing, not to the Emperor, but to his old rivals of Chosiu and Satsuma, thus exciting his alarm and inflaming clan jealousy once more. Assigning as a reason therefor his intention of protecting the Imperial interests against ambitious intrigues, he took the field at the head of his men and became in turn a rebel in arms. The civil war which followed is of special interest in connection with the subject of these pages, for it was not concluded until the opponents had measured swords on the sea as well as the land, and it taught the young Emperor and his new advisers that the ruler of an archipelagic State must be in a position to exercise effective force on salt water if he wishes not only to defend his realms against external attack, but to maintain his authority among his own subjects.

The rebel army commenced by marching forthwith on the Imperial seat of government at Kioto, but were met by the Imperial troops before reaching it and severely defeated. The ex-Shogun only escaped capture by flight to the coast, where he boarded a vessel of his own and returned to Tokio; but the Imperialists followed up their success by marching there also and demanding his surrender, with all the remnants of his fighting forces ashore and afloat. After some further resistance the

ex-Shogun and his remaining troops did surrender, but his ships refused to do so. These vessels formed a stronger squadron than anything the Emperor could bring against them at the time, although comprising only eight corvettes, armed steamers, and yachts, under the Shogun's Admiral Enomoto. On hearing of the surrender of their comrades on shore, they left their anchorage in Yokohama Bay and sailed for the coast of Yezo, the northernmost of the three principal islands of the Empire, in October, 1868. In addition to their own crews they carried a large number of malcontents and rebels, all trained to arms, which Enomoto organized as a land force, and with these he captured Hakodate, the principal town in the island. There he established his headquarters, and, having proclaimed an independent Republic, extended his hold over a considerable area.

For several months he remained supreme in Yezo, as the Imperial Government were powerless to embark on any active measures against him while he was the stronger at sea; but they were in a position to prevent supplies of any kind reaching his ships from their former arsenal and dockyard, and, as Enomoto's financial resources were small, he was soon in difficulties to obtain fuel and ammunition for his squadron. Eventually the Emperor was able to purchase several vessels suitable for his requirements, some being small war-vessels formerly belonging to other States, and others merchant-steamers convertible to fighting purposes. With these the Imperial Government felt strong enough to undertake operations, and in April, 1869, despatched a squadron of seven ships to Awomori Bay, which lies at the northern end of the main island of Nipon, opposite to Hakodate. By this move on their part Enomoto was compelled to keep the rebel squadron concentrated for the protection of his base, which had no other defences, and thereby prevented from spreading to reconnoitre, or threaten the many alternative sea lines of communication between Nipon and Yezo. He recognized that under these circum-

stances he had nothing to lose by taking the offensive—which, in fact, was his only chance—and being a bold leader in war, if not a far-seeing politician in peace, he attacked the Imperialist squadron at their anchorage and nearly captured their flagship by actual boarding. This enterprise just fell short of success, however, and he was repulsed with considerable damage to his ships. For two months the squadrons remained facing each other, during which period the Imperial party assembled and embarked a force of troops in hired transports, which they despatched by a circuitous route far out to sea, and landed on the east coast of Yezo, at a point about seventy miles to the northward or rear of Hakodate. The rebel admiral might possibly have intercepted these had he been aware of the movement, but his enforced concentration kept him entirely ignorant of his enemy's activities except immediately in front of him, and the loss of two of his best ships by running ashore in the uncharted waters in which he was operating increased his difficulties.

After their disembarkation the Imperial troops advanced on Hakodate, driving the comparatively weak rebel land force before them, and at the end of a month's marching and fighting arrived near the outskirts of the town and proceeded to invest it on the land side. Enomoto's hold on Yezo was thereby terminated, and his only base threatened; but as there remained the possibility that he would break away with his ships and seek the sanctuary of some neutral port as a political refugee, the Imperial squadron now began active measures, and after some preliminary long-range skirmishes delivered a close attack on the rebel squadron in Hakodate Bay. In the severe action which ensued one of the attacking vessels was blown up, but two of the rebels were sunk, and as Enomoto had then only four left and very little ammunition, he surrendered with the remnant of his command. By his submission the very last vestige of the once great power of the forces of the Shoguns of Japan passed for ever, and the realms over which they

had ruled became for the first time for 600 years united as one Empire under their legitimate Sovereign.

In his account of the incidents of this rebellion, Adams speaks of the Imperial squadron as if, in the opening stages, it had not been commanded with a proper spirit of enterprise; but that criticism is not justified, for, whether by intention or otherwise, the manner of its use was extremely well suited to the special circumstances of the case. With the opposing forces so evenly matched as they were at sea, the results of an immediate attack on the rebels would have been at least a matter of chance, especially as Enomoto was a bold and capable commander. No doubt if the Imperialists had won the secessionist cause would have collapsed at once, but if the victory had gone to their enemies the suppression of the rebellion would have been indefinitely postponed. By taking up a threatening attitude directly opposite the rebel base and avoiding decisive contact for the time, they placed Enomoto at a serious disadvantage, and reduced the risks attendant on the sea transport of the Emperor's army to a minimum. When the rebel base was invested on the land side, then the Imperial admiral very properly forced a decision on the water. Apart from its purely Japanese aspects, this insurrection was instructive, for although the forces engaged on both sides were on a small scale, the progress of events furnished a clear indication of the difficulties attending any rebellious enterprise undertaken by a fleet. An insurrectionary army may overthrow an existing Government and set up another, because, if strong enough, it can usually find sources of supply and money for waging war. But a fleet is ultimately dependent on the land for all its requirements, and unable to maintain its fighting efficiency, or even to move, without supplies, which—especially as regards ammunition—can usually be denied to it by the authorities with whom it is in conflict, and which it cannot obtain outside its own country except with great difficulty. Enomoto's ultimate success was always doubtful for these reasons, even if, for a time,

he was able to maintain his independence owing to the weakness of the Imperial power at sea.

After these events the progress of Japan went steadily forward. The young Emperor proved to be enlightened and progressive in his views, and was supported by a singularly able and patriotic body of responsible advisers. Abandoning the old traditions of rigid seclusion, he received the representatives of the foreign Powers in person, and eventually transferred the Imperial residence and seat of government to Tokio, which has been the recognized capital of Japan ever since. A few fanatics refused to accept the new era, and outrages on foreigners still occasionally took place, but were firmly dealt with by the Japanese authorities, to the complete satisfaction of the foreign legations. An Imperial navy was founded, which in its early developments was organized and trained by British officers specially lent for the purpose, and was destined soon to make a notable mark in history. When Perry handed the American President's letter to the representative of the ruling authority in Japan the Japanese flag was absolutely unknown on the high seas. Fifty years later it was flying at the ensign staffs of one of the most formidable fleets of modern times, whose officers and men were richer in personal experiences of maritime war than their contemporaries in any other naval service in the world.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CHINO-JAPANESE WAR

REFERENCE has been made on several previous pages to the strategical and political importance to Japan of maintaining the Korean peninsula free from annexation or domination by a strong naval Power, and for the first 1,500 years of well-authenticated Japanese history Korea was the only alien territory in regard to which Japan can be said to have evinced any official interest, or formulated a foreign policy in any definite shape. As the transit of the seas became more and more practicable with the progress of science and the developments in naval architecture which science rendered possible, so did this importance of Korea to Japan become more and more accentuated. In the days of the Mongols any enemy who had planted his foot in Korea, although arriving thereby at the nearest possible position on *terra firma* to the Japanese shore, was yet still separated therefrom by an uncertain interval of time, which might be anything from three or four days to as many weeks. And even under the most favourable conditions a strict limit was imposed, as we have seen, on the force with which he could undertake an attempt at invasion. But in the nineteenth century, when Japan appeared on the stage as an ambitious and progressive State, the passage from Korea could be completed with some certainty in a few hours, unless under exceptional conditions of weather, and an enemy making the attempt would be subject to no limitations in the matter of sea transport.

The invasion of an island, however, is only possible by the sea, and if the sea passage can be prevented by superior naval power, then it does not much matter whether it is a channel of only twenty odd miles which



the invaders must cross—such as the Strait of Dover—or the whole width of the ocean. Japan has never had to fear invasion by an enemy in Korea when that enemy's flag has carried less heavy metal afloat than her own, any more than Great Britain had to fear it from Napoleon or Wilhelm II., in spite of what St. Vincent called the "old women of both sexes" have so often asserted to the contrary. But invasion is not the only method of operating against an opponent across the water. There are others not so easily dealt with. As Jean Bart and Duguay-Trouin demonstrated plainly enough to the British naval officers of the eighteenth century, considerable damage can be inflicted on the economic resources of an enemy, even in the face of a superior fleet, by determined and skilful men, if they have the advantage of secure bases within easy reach of important trade routes. With an aggressive Power in occupation of the fine and easily defended natural harbours of the Korean coast; a few such men with a naval force at their disposal, even much inferior to that of the Japanese, could yet cause perpetual apprehension and appreciable loss to Japanese commercial interests, and impose a burden on Japanese finances for the maintenance of a blockade analogous to the heavy strain thrown upon the British Treasury to enforce the blockade of the French ports in the Napoleonic wars. From a naval point of view, therefore, Japan was always concerned to keep the Korean harbours in their ancient status of undefended fishing ports, free from the grip of any ambitious Power which might convert them into sea fortresses available as shelters for maritime raiders.

But it has always been the tragedy of Korea to be strategically important to China as well as to Japan. Like the Belgians between France and Germany, or other small peoples in history wedged in between heavy-footed neighbours, the Koreans have suffered from living in a land whose position gave natural advantages for war to others, and which rendered their soil either a direct object of covetousness, or at the least an allotment upon

which their neighbours trampled by turns, for the express purpose of preventing other people from trampling on it. Its strategic importance to China is obvious from a glance at the chart. The communications of the Chinese Imperial capital and seat of government at Pekin with the outside world—over which the large annual rice tribute from the southern provinces and other food supplies travel—lie chiefly by the Peiho River into the Gulf of Pechili, and so on into the Yellow Sea. The eastern boundary of the Yellow Sea is formed by the west coast of Korea, which thus flanks the approaches of the principal entry and exit to and from Pekin; and, ever since that city has formed the Imperial capital and seat of administration, Chinese policy has aimed at keeping Korea peculiarly subject to Chinese domination, but free from the influence or coercion of other States and especially from interference by Japan.

Herein lay for centuries a perpetual source of irritation and jealousy between the statesmen of Pekin and Kioto. Neither could perhaps be accused of actively aggressive intentions towards Korea—with the notorious exception of Hideyoshi—but neither wished to see the other there. As a rule the claims of China were the more specifically asserted up till the year 1882, and were more definitely supported by the presence from time to time of armed forces. And Korea usually treated China as having the better rights in her territory, although these were always vague, and the attitude thus taken up was more due to fear than to predilection. From all this China frequently laid a claim to Korea as a tributary State, although with varying emphasis according to the political conditions prevailing from time to time, and the advantages or responsibilities which such a claim might entail. But the Japanese never recognized these pretensions or made any corresponding claim on their part. Their policy was to keep Korea free and independent from any external entanglements.

When Japan emerged from retirement in the middle of the nineteenth century and began the introduction of

Western methods of administration, the problem of Korea became more acute and complex than ever. The Chinese authorities regarded the Japanese adoption of civilized and progressive government with profound distrust, and did their utmost to prevent the spread of any such ideas of reform into Korea, where they supported the ancient forces of conservatism and reaction, and, on several occasions, sent troops to assist the Korean Government in quelling insurrection. In this attitude they found great favour with the Korean Court party, where the Queen was dominant and placed all her relations in the various offices of authority, with the result that the people were atrociously misgoverned and oppressed. The Japanese policy, on the other hand, was all in favour of progress, and although not interfering in the internal administration of the country, they used their influence to spread reform indirectly, and gave asylum to Korean political refugees of advanced ideas; with the result that they became so intensely unpopular with the Court party, that the Japanese diplomatic representative in Seoul had more than once to seek safety in flight. Affairs were in this permanently chaotic and conflicting condition when an arrangement for placing them on a definitely settled footing was made in 1885 whereby China, after much hesitation, agreed, by the Treaty of Tientsin, that neither the Chinese nor the Japanese authorities might send troops to Korea without acquainting the other party to the contract. Not long before it was ratified the Korean Government had taken the important step of concluding certain commercial treaties with several European Powers.

This event afforded Japan a well-established foundation for her constantly asserted claim that Korea was an independent State and not a tributary of China, for although the precise conditions which constitute the freedom of a people from external supervision are nowhere actually laid down, it is generally recognized among the nations that an unfettered control of its foreign affairs entitles any country to the status of independence; and the view held by the Japanese authorities would probably

have received the endorsement of any body of international jurists had it been referred to a Court of Arbitration. But the Japanese knew that Pekin would obstinately refuse to accept any such ruling if the matter were brought up in this way, and as a protection to their own interests, they based their practical policy on the terms of the Tientsin Convention, whereby they were entitled, by an agreement under the Imperial seal of China, to equal privileges with the Pekin Government in regard to the despatch of armed forces to Korean territory.

Matters remained on this footing for nine years more, during which period the misgovernment of Korea went from bad to worse, until even that incredibly long-suffering people had been goaded into an effort to relieve their misery from a degree of tyranny that had become unendurable. Early in 1894 a secret political society, animated by no more harmful aim than to ameliorate the intolerable situation of the population, broke into revolt and soon obtained a considerable measure of success in their conflicts with the troops of their oppressors. These latter, instigated thereto by the Chinese diplomatic representative in Seoul, applied to Pekin for armed assistance in quelling the insurrection, which was immediately forthcoming. But by the terms of the Tientsin Treaty the Chinese authorities were bound to notify Japan of the action they were about to take, and in the letter conveying this information they once again referred to Korea as their "tributary State." To this the Japanese took exception in their reply, and, while not entering any actual protest against the despatch of Chinese troops, they intimated that they on their part would send a Japanese force to protect Japanese interests in the unsettled state of the country. Furthermore, they suggested that a joint commission should be appointed by China and Japan to investigate Korean affairs and submit recommendations for improving the administration and finances. Such a proposal was not, of course, properly consistent with the theory of Korean independence, and it was inspired in part no doubt by a desire to benefit

Japanese commercial interests, which stood to gain by any economic improvement in the condition of that country. But it demonstrated that Japan was not pressing for any advantages which she was not prepared to share with China, and the suggestion was at least one which offered the prospect of amelioration to the Koreans themselves. The Chinese authorities, however, took alarm at the notion of reforming the Korean Government, which was the last thing they desired. A prompt rejection of the Japanese proposals ensued, and although at first claiming Korea as a tributary State, they now, in their haste to put a stop to any such projects, went to the opposite extreme, and declared with all the emphasis at their command that the Koreans were an independent people who must be allowed to manage their own affairs. A halt in the diplomatic correspondence then followed, for the Japanese had said their last word, and the rival policies had reached an irreconcilable point, both parties being committed to the despatch of armed forces to Korean territory under a situation from which neither had any intention of withdrawing.

The Chinese began by sending 2,000 men from Wei-hai-wei, and selected the port of Asan as the point of disembarkation—a harbour lying on the west coast of Korea well to the southward, about seventy miles from Seoul and within easy reach of the rebel headquarters farther inland. There they formed an entrenched camp. The Japanese on their part despatched an infantry brigade, about 4,000 strong, direct to the Korean capital, landing them first at Chemulpo. These two small armies were then only separated by a distance of a few hours' steaming by sea or a few days' march by land. It was, in theory at least, a risky move for Japan to send any troops at all in such a critical situation, dependent as they necessarily were upon sea communications whose safety was still an open question. But their intelligence service had accurately gauged the true war value of the Chinese fleet, and the course of events justified their acceptance of the risk.

For a few weeks the situation, although strained, underwent no change, except that the rebels, fearing that no chance of ultimate success remained, dispersed without further efforts to struggle against fate. The original object in despatching troops from China and Japan thus ceased to exist, and a mutual withdrawal was suggested by the Japanese, but to this the Chinese refused to agree. Finding, therefore, that their troops must remain in Korea, for the time at any rate, the Japanese resolved that the work of reform should no longer be put off, and if the Chinese would not co-operate they decided to take the matter in hand by themselves. This they had begun to do when information came to hand that the Chinese were preparing for the despatch of additional troops in large numbers for no obvious purpose but to strengthen their hold on Korea. Warning Peking that any such step would be regarded as an unfriendly act, the Japanese authorities directed the officer in command of their own brigade at Seoul to march to Asan, where the Chinese were entrenched, and be prepared to attack, and at the same time despatched a squadron of light cruisers to the west coast of Korea to prevent the arrival of any Chinese reinforcements by sea. A further cause of apprehension arose from the intelligence that a Chinese division 15,000 strong, with plenty of artillery, had crossed the Korean frontier and was advancing on Pongyang, a fortress of evil memory in their own history.

Matters were thus fast moving towards a situation in which it was necessary for the fighting services to be prepared for immediate emergencies, and although the moment had not quite arrived for the diplomats to quit the stage, war was something more than a possibility. The strategic conditions before the naval and military authorities on both sides were precisely similar in all their main features to those which had confronted their ancestors in the Korean War of the sixteenth century, although materially modified in their details by the progress of scientific invention in the interval. Like the inhabitants of any other insular empire, the Japanese

could do nothing to assert their rights in Korea or any other part of the world without first getting on board their ships, and it was because the Koreans under Yi-sun had fixed their attention mainly on this point that they brought disaster upon the schemes of Hideyoshi. The first thing, therefore, that demanded the attention of their authorities was the war chart hanging on the wall of the Tokio Admiralty, for if the Chinese were in a position to profit by Yi-sun's example, all Japanese aspirations in Korea were bound to come to an end. This the Chinese should certainly have been able to do, for in regard to its material specifications their fleet was undoubtedly the more powerful of the two. And they had the further advantage that for them defeat on the sea did not imply failure in everything else, as it did for Japan. A land route to Korea was at their disposal, and although for large-scale movements it was vastly less convenient and expeditious than the route by sea, this route did at least render it possible in theory for their soldiers to redeem any shortcomings on the part of their seamen where their position in Korea was concerned. Provided, therefore, that hostilities were limited to Korea, all the strategic advantages lay with China. If, on the other hand, the Chinese policy intended to regard Korea as a side-issue for the moment and strike at the heart of Japan—as Kublai Khan would certainly have done in the circumstances—these strategic advantages would disappear, but success in the endeavour would secure not only all Chinese interests in Korea but much else besides.

For the Pekin Government, therefore, lay the choice in theory of embarking either on an unlimited offensive, or of following a purely preventive or defensive policy, although the latter could, on paper at any rate, be carried out best by a naval strategy which was offensive in its methods of operation. When war did break out they confined themselves to the defensive from first to last, and it seems evident that they had neither any real grasp of the general situation nor any plans for dealing with it. The Japanese had both. The circumstances were

such that nothing but an offensive strategy could meet their requirements. Realizing this, they seized the initiative at the outset, and never allowing it to pass from their hands, forced the war to follow the course which best suited their purposes. In the first place they confined their attention to the limited objective of driving the Chinese out of Korea. But when that end had been accomplished they embarked on unlimited war, for reasons explained hereafter; and if the Chinese had continued to hold out long enough, there is very little reason to doubt that the Japanese plan of campaign would ultimately have aimed at dictating the terms of peace in Peking itself.

When a critical point had been reached in the diplomatic interchange of notes both sides prepared their sea forces. As already observed, the fleet under the yellow-dragon flag of the Emperor Kwang-su was the more formidable of the two on paper, but its constitution and system of administration were not conducive to a high state of efficiency for war. The Chinese Empire was divided up into large provinces, each equalling an average European State in area and population, and these provinces were ruled by Viceroys who raised their own revenues and maintained their own armies, distinct from the others; and in some cases a naval force as well. The various squadrons thus created were all at the absolute disposal of the Emperor and his council of war for the defence of his realms; but although all aimed in different degrees at copying British naval methods, they varied very much in their state of readiness for service and scale of establishment, and were not co-ordinated or organized in any way under a proper central authority. The northern or metropolitan province of Chi-li, in which stood Peking, was governed by the celebrated Viceroy Li-Hung-Chang, sometimes called the "Bismarck of China"; who, with the assistance of the Imperial Council, had founded a fleet more powerful than those of all the central and southern provinces put together, and this formed the main bulk of the Chinese sea force.



To estimate its true value is not easy, as the types of vessels varied very much, and almost every pattern of ordnance in use at the time in other countries was represented in the aggregate of their armaments. The better ships had been built in Germany or England, but the guns came from many different makers, and the extreme variety of ammunition rendered the question of war-supply very complex at best. A list of the vessels with their tonnage and armaments is given in Appendix I., together with a similar list of the fleet of their adversaries; but, as Chinese and Japanese names are apt to be very confusing to European readers, it may perhaps be preferable in the account of the war here given to omit names—except in the case of a few of the more important ships—and confine all reference to classes, especially as this account does not profess to be detailed. Eliminating wooden vessels and certain others not suitable for duties in the open sea, and using modern terms to differentiate the others, the total Chinese sea-going fleet might be summed up as consisting of five armoured vessels, ten small light cruisers, nine sloops or despatch-vessels, and thirty small torpedo-boats. Of non-sea-going types it included twenty-six very small coast-defence gunboats, but nearly all these were stationed up the Chinese rivers, and only six took any part in the war, which was confined to salt water.

The two principal armoured vessels were the German-built battleships *Ting-yuen* and *Chen-yuen*, of 7,430 tons displacement, each mounting four 12-inch Krupps and designed with good speed and protection according to the standards of their day. Properly handled and fought these two should have been more than a match for the six best ships of the Japanese Navy, and they did eventually engage these six for four hours without decisive result on either side. The remaining three Chinese armoured vessels were much smaller, displacing only 2,850 tons or thereabouts, and carrying a pair of 8-inch and a pair of 6-inch guns. These three were built at Foochow Dockyard, but some of their weapons were

British and some German. Relatively to the other types composing the Chinese fleets, they occupied a position analogous to that of armoured cruisers, and although "armoured cruisers" proper were at the time an unknown class of vessel, the term will be used in this context for convenience in referring to these three ships.

The ten light cruisers ranged from 2,200 to 2,600 tons in displacement. Each mounted two or three 8-inch guns, although of different patterns in different ships, and each carried in addition from two to eight lighter weapons of 4·8-inch to 6-inch calibre.

The nine sloops displaced from 1,000 to 1,250 tons. Two of these, built at Elswick, carried a pair of 10-inch Armstrongs each—an altogether disproportionate armament for their size, which handicapped them in other ways. The other seven mounted either one 6-inch and one 4-inch gun or a pair of 4·7-inch.

The thirty torpedo-boats were mostly of the old small type known as "second-class," but fit for operations near a base, and had they been handled in the same spirit as the torpedo craft in the Japanese Navy would have proved a very serious menace to the enemy, who had no defended harbour or anchorage in the principal theatre of operations.

A few years previously Li-Hung-Chang's fleet was in a serviceable condition. The Chinese Government had obtained the assistance of a very capable and energetic post-captain on the Active List of the British Navy as an organizer, who, with the co-operation of a staff of officers of the various branches of his own service and a few of other European and American nationalities, had worked it up into a useful fighting force. The discipline was excellent, the training conducted on sound lines both as regards theory and practice, and the administration was free from corruption. War stores were maintained up to establishment both on board and at the reserve depots. Externally the ships were smart and clean, internally they were in good working order. Constant cruises at sea kept their officers well practised

in manœuvring together, and every vessel was regularly docked for refit and overhaul. In all respects, therefore, the fleet represented a force to be reckoned with at its face value. And in the famous sea fortress of Port Arthur it had the additional advantage of a headquarter base of great natural strength in a commanding strategic position; well equipped with docks, basins, repairing plant, and store depots, and strongly fortified. During a certain epoch, therefore, not long antecedent to the war, China occupied a favourable maritime position, not only on paper but in fact. Unfortunately for the Chinese themselves, however, the jealousy of Europeans, which is so common among Oriental officials, began to assert itself; and by degrees the position of the foreigners was made so difficult that the head of the mission threw up the appointment and was followed by all the commissioned officers of the British service, although a small and heterogeneous collection of aliens of subordinate rank remained, some of whom were not naval officers at all. Deterioration soon followed. First the administration became dishonest and stores were peculated. Then favouritism and worse secured the appointment of incompetent officers to high places, with the result that discipline grew slack and training suffered. Docking and refitting were neglected to save money that went into the wrong pockets, and the ships themselves with their armaments and machinery were allowed to fall into bad repair. But whether by intention or otherwise, all this was concealed from higher authority by an adherence to the former standard of external appearances. Lying in Port Arthur or Wei-hai-wei, the ships presented smart and well-kept exteriors, which to some extent misled even European naval officers as to their real condition, and utterly deceived a landsman such as Li-Hung-Chang on his State visits of inspection to the fleet. None but the Japanese knew the real truth, thanks to their excellent secret intelligence service. When war with Japan was imminent the chief command was in the hands of Admiral Ting, an ignorant officer, whose sole qualification for his

responsible post was an unmistakable personal courage of which he gave frequent proof. By no means the least of the advantages enjoyed by the Japanese lay in the fact that the conduct of the hostile operations rested with a man who had little in common with the great leader whose genius had inspired their enemy's resistance on the sea 300 years before.

In Japan at that time the Navy held but an indifferent place in the public esteem—chiefly from political causes—and except in official circles its real efficiency was not understood. Domestic politics, when first introduced into Japan on European models, developed some of their worst forms of intrigue between parties, and although the governing classes had agreed to sink all the old rivalry between clans when the Shogunate was abolished, an undercurrent of the former jealousy still remained. The Satsuma clan had been the first to take up the idea of a national navy with energy and enthusiasm, and the young men of good Satsuma families had come forward to officer the new service in greater numbers than all the other classes put together, with the result that Satsuma influence was supreme in the fleet. This caused political rivals to declaim against its efficiency to such an extent that for some years before the war the Government had experienced considerable difficulty in getting the naval estimates passed. In point of fact, the nation was obtaining very good value for its money all the time, but the exploits of the fleet when put to the supreme test of war were so little expected that they caused as much surprise as elation.

This fleet differed from that of their adversaries in nearly all the essentials of a war service. In the first place, it was a single organization under the control of a central authority, and administered as such. Secondly, the administration was honest and important appointments went by merit, with the result that the discipline was second to none in the world, and all ranks and ratings were animated by a high professional spirit. Training was thorough, great care and attention were devoted to

the upkeep of the vessels and their armaments, and all stocks and reserves of war munitions were maintained at proper levels. Like the fleet of Li-Hung-Chang, the fleet of the Japanese Emperor was originally modelled on British naval standards in almost every point of importance, and like the Chinese the Japanese had parted with the British officers who had been their first instructors; not, however, because the latter were dissatisfied, but because their own officers felt that the time had arrived when they were competent to assume full responsibility themselves. But in dispensing with British guidance the Japanese service had not been allowed to fall into decay. All the lessons received were borne in mind and real efficiency for war was the sole object kept before officers and men alike. Externally, perhaps, their vessels left no better an impression on the casual spectator than those of their prospective opponents, but that was because they were much more exposed to sea weather. In his writings on European wars Mahan has drawn a comparison between the trim appearance of Villeneuve's ships lying idly shut up in Cadiz and the storm-beaten British vessels watching and waiting for them outside. In a lesser degree some such comparison might have been made between the Chinese and Japanese fleets of 1894, and to this day the rival claims of paintwork and gunnery are familiar to every naval service. With the Japanese paintwork received such attention as was possible, but was relegated to its proper place. On the other hand, their armaments were well oiled, their engines ran smoothly, and, above all, their officers and men were thoroughly acquainted with the handling and use of their ships and the weapons they carried. A Japanese vessel was kept in her proper station in the squadron, and a Japanese gun was well laid before firing and quickly loaded again. When war appeared imminent Vice-Admiral Count Ito was appointed Commander-in-Chief — a capable and enterprising officer, to whose lot it fell to demonstrate to the hitherto unsuspecting world that in the new Japanese fleet a fresh factor

requiring serious attention had appeared in international politics.

In its actual composition its weakest point was the total lack of any armoured integers of even moderately recent type. The only armoured ships appearing in the Japanese Navy List were three small obsolete broadside vessels, built nearly twenty years previously and almost worn out. These three were mobilized, nevertheless, and used, although their presence with the fleet was more a source of anxiety to Ito than of strength. One small cruiser also carried a 5-inch belt, but with it so light an armament as to be in effect a light cruiser only, in which category she is included in the lists and comments which follow.

Of the remainder of the fleet the principal ships were three unarmoured cruisers of 4,300 tons displacement, two of which were built in France and the third in Japan from French plans. Each of these carried a 12·8-inch 66-ton Canet gun with a 4·7-inch secondary armament. Two carried the heavy weapon mounted forward, and the third mounted it aft, but their designs embodied the serious defect of an excessive development of fire from one end of the ship at the expense of an insufficient volume of fire at the other, and it was never repeated in later vessels. At the same time, their hitting power was formidable, and, in truth, it was their three Canet guns which formed the foundation upon which all Japanese plans afloat and ashore were built up, for to Japan everything depended from the outset upon obtaining the command of the sea, and in these monster pieces of ordnance lay almost their only hope of securing it. These vessels formed the main part of the Japanese line of battle in consequence, and one of them, the *Matsushima*, carried the flag of the Commander-in-Chief.

Next to these three ships came five light cruisers displacing from 3,000 to 4,000 tons, of which two were armed with a pair of 10-inch weapons and the others carried mixed armaments of 6-inch and 4·7-inch calibre. Although only half as numerous as the light cruisers of

the Chinese Navy, they were individually larger and better vessels. Four of the five possessed a sufficiently equal speed to work well together as a squadron. The fifth, in spite of only mounting a 5-inch armament, was stationed in the main division of the fleet by virtue of carrying a 5-inch belt, which put her in the same line as the ships with 12·8-inch weapons. Her nondescript design made it difficult to place her usefully in company with any vessels in the whole fleet.

The Japanese sloops were twelve in number, ranging from 600 to 1,700 tons in displacement. One carried an armament of two 10-inch Armstrongs and was a sister vessel in every detail to the pair of similarly gunned sloops in the Chinese Fleet. Another was very fast and modern. The remainder were rather old. Ship for ship they were a fairly even match for the same class under the dragon flag.

Thirty-eight small torpedo-boats completed the Japanese naval forces, which did some excellent work in the second phase of the war.

In the aggregate, therefore, the Japanese sea forces consisted of three quite obsolete battleships, three light cruisers carrying battleship guns, five light cruisers of normal design or nearly so, twelve sloops, and thirty-eight torpedo craft. This gave Japan a less powerful fleet than that of her opponents, which suffered under the further disadvantage of possessing no secure or defended base or war anchorage immediately facing the main theatre of operations, such as the Chinese possessed in Port Arthur, and also to some extent in Wei-hai-wei.

As already observed, the Japanese Government, on hearing of the intended movement of Chinese reinforcements towards Korea, had despatched a light-cruiser squadron of three vessels, under Rear-Admiral Tsuboi, to intercept their passage by sea if possible, and ordered the Japanese brigade at Seoul to march towards Asan and be prepared to attack the Chinese camp. War had not so far been actually declared, but these measures were

the first step in that direction and very soon caused active hostilities to begin. For its intended purpose this light-cruiser squadron would have been inadequate if the Chinese had used their main fleet as a protection to their transports, but Tsuboi's command was fast enough to avoid action if confronted by a superior force, and the Chinese failed to take proper precautions. As if in contempt of the Japanese warnings against sending more troops to Korea, they merely detailed an escort of one light cruiser and one sloop for the transports. These two vessels, however, with two munition ships, had arrived safely on July 24 in Asan Harbour before Tsuboi could reach the scene, and after completing this duty, sailed early next morning to return to a Chinese port. But a couple of hours later, while steaming westwards among the numerous islets off the coast and passing through the narrow channel which separates them from the mainland, they suddenly encountered the three Japanese cruisers making from the opposite direction towards Asan. The latter turned at once to a parallel course and attacked. A running fight ensued in which the Chinese had no chance from the first, for not only were they outnumbered, but the quick-firing Japanese armaments completely smothered the comparatively slow-firing Chinese guns. Both Chinese vessels were soon on fire, and while the sloop steered for the beach in a sinking condition, the light cruiser made for Wei-hai-wei, where she eventually arrived in a considerably damaged condition after being chased for part of the way by one of her enemies. As the action was terminating a third Chinese vessel was sighted ahead, which turned and retreated, but was soon overhauled and captured, proving to be a converted merchant steamer employed for despatch work. Some hours later, while Tsuboi was cruising on the same spot, on the watch, yet another vessel was observed approaching from the northward. This was the British steamer *Kowshing*, chartered by the Chinese Government for the conveyance of 1,200 picked troops and a field-battery to Asan, all under the orders



of a German military officer. Trusting to her British ensign for immunity from attack, she was provided with no escort at all; and as her master was quite unaware of the events occurring only a few hours before, he pursued his course in no anticipation of immediate danger, till a signal was received to anchor at once from one of the Japanese cruisers steaming towards him. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the latter was commanded by a Captain Togo, destined later to become historically famous. When she had anchored as directed, the *Kowshing* was boarded by a boat from the cruiser, conveying instructions to weigh again and follow the Japanese ship. The British master, and the German officer commanding the troops, realized that refusal was hopeless, but the troops mutinied and demanded that if not allowed to land in Korea they should be sent back to Taku, whence they had come. For three hours the Japanese carried on parley and discussion, but all in vain, and then, finding it impossible to get any orders obeyed and having other duties of a pressing nature to carry out, the cruiser fired a torpedo and sank the *Kowshing* with the great majority of the people on board. The Japanese picked up the British officers, treated them well, and gave them their liberty, but were accused of making insufficient efforts to rescue the Chinese soldiers; and the incident occasioned much protest and controversy at the time, on the grounds that they had no right to sink a vessel under British colours before war was declared. The British Government, however, after mature deliberation, decided that as a cruiser engagement had already taken place the same morning a state of war existed, under which the Japanese action was not unjustifiable; and moreover, if British owners chose to place their vessels at the disposal of foreign States they must accept the risks attendant thereon and look to their employers for protection. From an historical point of view the incident was very noteworthy as being the very first occasion on which a troop transport was ever sunk by a Whitehead torpedo, thus affording unmistakable proof

that a new danger threatened the movement of armies by sea, through the introduction of a deadly weapon capable of use in even the smallest-sized vessels.

News of Tsuboi's engagement reached the Japanese brigade marching on Asan very soon, and relieved the general in command of any apprehensions of finding the Chinese force materially increased in strength on his arrival. It had been a race between him on the land and the Chinese reinforcements on the water as to who should get there first, which the latter had been on the point of winning when Tsuboi intervened with decisive effect. Continuing his advance, a few days after the opening exchange of shots at sea, he commenced the war on land, by storming the Chinese trenches at Asan and breaking up the whole defending force. This relieved the Japanese of any danger from that direction, but a more serious menace was threatening them from the Chinese frontier to the northward.

Six days after Tsuboi's affair the Japanese Emperor delivered a formal declaration of war, which was followed by an interval of more than a month as regards further encounters on either element, while a general mobilization was being pressed forward. This period was occupied by the Japanese in strenuous preparation for the despatch of a large army and the collection of its sea transport, and by the Chinese in pouring troops into Korea by the land route to seize the northern Korean fortress of Peng-yang and other points of strategic importance. Properly it should have witnessed the settling of the vital question of maritime superiority one way or the other, for both navies were fully mobilized long before the land forces, and the Japanese cruised continually about the Yellow Sea, often within sight of the enemy's ships lying in Port Arthur. But the latter refused to take up the challenge and never lifted an anchor. It was afterwards averred by an American in the Chinese service that Ting wished to go out and engage, but was ordered to refrain by his Government. But although the Pekin authorities did undoubtedly interfere incessantly with

their naval and military commanders, the fact remains that when the day arrived on which Ting did meet the enemy at sea his tactics evinced more of a desire to get home than to take the offensive. This was not due to any lack of personal courage, for whatever his faults may have been cowardice cannot be laid to his charge. It is more likely that he realized his own unfitness for a command requiring a high degree of professional competence, and was alive to the ignorance of some of his officers.

The Chinese authorities meanwhile had heard with alarm of Japanese preparations for the despatch of troops to Korea on a large scale. Totally failing to perceive that by the experiences of their own country in the sixteenth century it was far the best plan for them to intercept this army while helpless on the sea, or possibly doubtful of the efficiency of their fleet after the encounter of two of their ships with Tsuboi, they contented themselves at first by continuing to send more troops to Korea by land all the way. This certainly ensured their safety against attacks by Japanese ships, but in the absence of any railway the route was very slow, and except at great loss of time, useless as a line of movement for their best troops in Shantung, right on the far side of the Yellow Sea from Korea, hundreds of miles distant by road. Eventually a partial use of the sea route became unavoidable, and having been duly impressed with the consequences of sending an insufficient escort with the *Kowshing*, they ordered Ting at last to get to sea and undertake convoy duty with all his available ships, thus for the first time placing him within reach of Japanese attack. The Chinese admiral sailed accordingly with his two battleships, his three armoured cruisers, three light cruisers, and four sloops, as escort for some transports leaving Taku for the mouth of the Yalu River, which forms the boundary between Korean and Chinese territory. There he arrived without incident on September 16 and anchored his main fleet some miles outside, but sent an armoured cruiser with a sloop and two torpedo-boats into the river with the transports.

For nearly a month Japanese troops had been landing in Korea in ever-increasing numbers, some on the east coast and some on the west, but none molested or threatened while on the sea. By the beginning of September the Army Command decided that the force in the field had reached sufficient dimensions to undertake the offensive, and a northerly movement was started of which the first important result was the assault and capture of the fortress of Peng-yang with most of its garrison, after some stiff fighting, on September 16—the very day on which Ting had arrived off the Yalu not far distant to the northward. It so happened that during the immediately preceding period the main Japanese fleet had been employed in precisely the same work as their enemy—that is to say, in escorting troop transports. On September 14 Ito and all his command, with thirty troopships carrying reinforcements under his protection, arrived off the mouth of the Taidong River, on which, as observed in a previous chapter, stands the town of Peng-yang at some distance from the sea, and at that moment on the eve of capture by the Japanese army. In this he had successfully accomplished the very operation which Hideyoshi had planned, but Yi-sun had frustrated, just 300 years before. Knowing that the plan of the land campaign was to push on to the frontier if Peng-yang was taken, and having no more convoy duty requiring his attention for the moment, he decided to co-operate with the land advance by scouring the Gulf of Korea, to prevent sea-borne reinforcements or supplies from reaching the remnants of the Chinese army retiring northwards from the Peng-yang neighbourhood towards Manchuria. Having left the transports under his charge safely at their destination, he sailed on September 16 on a reconnoitring cruise to the northward and eastward with this object in view. Although neither knew it, both fleets were now at sea within a very short distance of each other, which every turn of Ito's propellers diminished. The decisive hour of the seamen's share in the war was therefore at hand.

The Japanese ships were organized in two divisions of unequal strength. The main division consisted of the three heavily armed vessels of the *Matsushima* class, the belted light cruiser *Chiyoda*, and two very old broadside battleships. This last pair were always at the rear of the line, where in spite of the utmost exertions of their stokers they constantly dropped astern, and one was so slow that only by cutting corners at every alteration of course could she keep station at all; in pursuit of which method of retaining his proper place in the line her captain broke right through the middle of the Chinese fleet in the heat of battle within a cable's distance of their most powerful ships on either hand, and risked being blown out of the water rather than suffer any accusation of avoidable lagging. The other Japanese division was composed of four fast light cruisers under Tsuboi, who seems to have been entrusted with a very wide discretion in regard to his tactical movements, judging from the wording of Ito's despatches. A gunboat and an armed merchant cruiser were attached for auxiliary service, and ran great risks in carrying out their duties.

The Japanese fleet first made for the island of Hai-yun-tau to the north-westward, off which they arrived at daybreak on September 17, but found no signs of the enemy. They then headed north-eastward towards the mouth of the Yalu River. Here Ting's fleet were still at anchor, and as the Japanese were burning very smoky coal his lookouts discerned the approach of some large force nearly an hour before they were sighted themselves, which gave the Chinese time to weigh and form for action. No option but to fight now remained, as the Japanese were between them and Port Arthur, evidently bent on forcing battle. It was in the direction of Port Arthur, therefore, that Ting steered, and as this brought the fleets steaming towards each other their mutual approach was rapid. Ting's standing orders for fleet action were of the crudest description, based on the principle that when once engaged each captain was to

act as he considered best under the circumstances—which a little later two of them interpreted as giving them permission to run away altogether—but as far as possible sister ships were to act in concert. For general guidance all were to watch the flagship. Orders of such a kind make it obvious that he exercised no effective control over his force for tactical purposes, and either understood very little of fleet manœuvring himself or placed no reliance on his captains for working together. It is, however, but fair to admit that the science of manœuvring steam fleets in action was only in its infancy everywhere at the time. One other order of his on record directed that no quarter was to be given to the enemy—an order which suggests the working of a mind embittered by anticipations of defeat, and only hoping for some chance opportunity of wreaking a savage revenge.

In weighing, the Chinese admiral formed his fleet in single line abreast, but left the armoured cruiser, the sloop, and the two torpedo-boats which were up the river to follow on as a separate division. British officers had taught the Chinese that line abreast is a good formation for the approach stage of a fleet action, and Ting accepted this teaching. But as every naval officer now knows, a line abreast must always be prepared to turn together in either direction to prevent the enemy from attacking a wing or crossing the "T." Moreover, the wings should be formed of powerful ships even at the expense of strength at the centre. Ting omitted to observe either of these important points. He placed his four armoured vessels in the centre, two sloops and one light cruiser as his starboard wing, and two light cruisers and one sloop as his port, giving a line of ten vessels all told. Then he blundered straight ahead. He knew the letter "A" of the naval tactician's alphabet—more or less—but that was all, which was worse than learning nothing at all, for it merely led him to dispose his ships in a formation giving very favourable opportunities to the enemy if he did not understand how to make proper use of it himself. And as line abreast is difficult to keep

for any length of time except with very well-handled ships, his formation was already getting ragged before the fight began. It was then about midday.

Ito saw his chance and took it, but can scarcely have dared to hope for such initial good luck as followed. His own fleet were in single line ahead with the light-cruiser division in the van. Steaming at full speed diagonally across the enemy's bows, he made straight for the starboard or northern end of their line. The Chinese ships opened a heavy fire as he passed, but, the range being long and the targets in rapid movement,

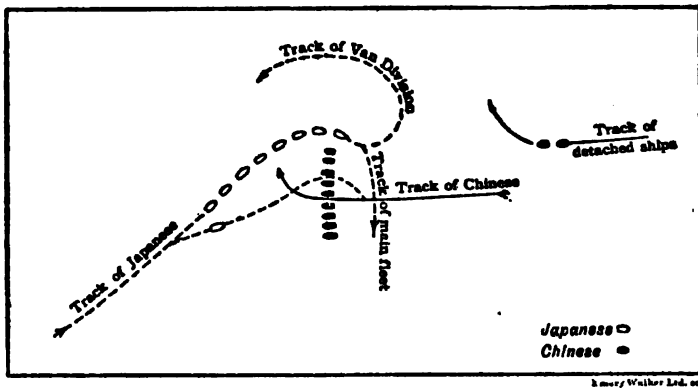


FIG. 4.—DIAGRAM SHOWING OPENING MOVEMENTS AT BATTLE OF YALU. (NOT TO SCALE.)

failed to hit, and Ting made no attempt—or, at any rate, no effective attempt—to counter Ito's manoeuvre by a turn to starboard, with which he might easily have parried it. In a very short time the Japanese ships were dashing round the end of the Chinese line, each delivering her full broadside at close range at the wing ships as she passed, two of which were shattered wrecks on fire fore and aft in a few minutes in consequence. The Japanese van division as they carried out this movement turned in succession sharply back with the intention of getting ahead of the enemy again—a movement which Tsuboi carried out on his own initiative—while the main division,

led by Ito in the *Matsushima*, steered across their rear. By this time the Chinese fleet had lost all formation, their starboard wing being destroyed and the remainder "bunched" and masking each other's guns. Ting turned to the northward in his flagship, and the others turned in the same direction accordingly, except the light cruiser and sloop which had been on the extreme left of the original line, whose captains, finding themselves brought to the rear by the new direction in which the fleet was steering, and seeing a clear chance to escape, quitted the fight with alacrity and made straight for Port Arthur. The northward turn of the Chinese fleet had the result of bringing it between the fire of the main Japanese division on its starboard hand and the van division coming down to port, but this situation did not last long, for the fleets were passing on opposite courses, and the Chinese broke up into two portions. Ting himself, followed by his one other battleship, again altered course, this time to the eastward, while the remainder of his vessels adhered to the northerly direction leading towards the land. Each portion received the attention of a Japanese division, with the result that the battle resolved itself to some extent into two fights drawing apart from each other. Tsuboi, with his light cruisers, closely engaged that portion of the enemy which was making to the northward, and succeeded in sinking an armoured cruiser and a light cruiser. The three Chinese sloops were now no longer among their consorts, one being sunk early in the battle, another retreating towards the land in flames—which was afterwards found run ashore and destroyed—and the third having made off towards Port Arthur as already mentioned. Ito in the meantime, with the main Japanese division, followed up and fought the two Chinese battleships strenuously till the evening, circling constantly round them as they stood first in one direction and then in another, like a pair of wounded buffaloes worried by a pack of wolves. But in spite of a great expenditure of ammunition, no decisive impression could be made on their well-armoured



hulls; and although their upper works were shot away, large numbers of their crews killed, and the vessels set on fire several times, they remained undamaged in any vital part. Ting offered a stubborn defence, and although his flagship was suffering a good deal the unarmoured Japanese flagship was suffering more. Her big Canet gun and half her secondary armament were knocked out of action, her sides were full of holes, her ammunition racks in the battery were exploded by the enemy's shells and set her badly on fire, and nearly a third of her crew had fallen before the end of the fight. Her condition became, in fact, so bad that Ito had to shift his flag to another ship during the height of the engagement.

When night was drawing near, the Chinese armoured cruiser and sloop with a pair of torpedo-boats, which had been up the river when the main Chinese fleet weighed in the morning but had followed on, were observed by Ito to be approaching to Ting's support, and as he found it beyond his power to sink or capture the enemy's battleships before dark and was apprehensive about the possibility of a torpedo-boat flotilla coming out from Port Arthur for a night attack, he recalled his cruiser division and broke off the action at sunset, intending to resume it next morning. Collecting his somewhat scattered forces, he despatched the crippled *Matsushima* for home, and as the Chinese were now standing to the south-westward in the direction of Wei-hai-wei, he steered a parallel course for the night, keeping a sharp lookout for torpedo craft. But Ting and the remnant of his fleet turned under cover of darkness and made for Port Arthur, and the Japanese finding no trace of them at daylight, shaped course for harbour themselves, to repair damages, replenish magazines, and fill up with coal. The battle having ended in this fashion was sometimes claimed by the Chinese as a draw. But five of them were no longer afloat, whereas the Japanese had lost none. The Chinese light cruiser which deserted her consorts early in the fight reached Port Arthur in safety, but her captain was very properly executed for cowardice

by Ting. The runaway sloop took the ground through bad navigation not far to the eastward of the same place, where she was discovered and destroyed by a scouting Japanese cruiser a few days later.

Like the Battle of Jutland, to which the main course of events presented many parallels on a reduced scale, the Battle of the Yalu—to give it the name by which it is usually known in England—was decisive in one way but indecisive in another. Its moral effect on the Chinese was such that they never afterwards dared to face the Japanese on the open sea. But that was not a result of so tangible a form as to become evident at once or establish a condition of obvious security for Japanese movements. Their enemy's fleet had suffered losses, but its greater portion, including the most important vessels, had regained shelter and remained a fleet in being. As such it constituted a permanent menace to all the Japanese operations and affected the whole of their plan of campaign to the end of the war. The Japanese Navy was never able to relax a watchful attitude without incurring risk, or to embark on operations on the southern coasts of China which might have led to important results. And the Japanese Army was equally affected. The capture of the two fortified Chinese naval bases, and the total destruction of the main Chinese fleet became the next object in the plans not only of the Japanese seamen but of the Japanese soldiers. The Battle of the Yalu, therefore, although a victory for Japan—and a very honourable victory considering the relative strength of the forces engaged—cannot be classed in the category of overwhelming triumphs such as Quiberon, Trafalgar, or Tsushima. Nevertheless, it drew the attention of the world at once towards Japan. It is true that the news of the success of the Japanese arms at Peng-yang had been published a few days before, but at that time the Western public mind was ill-informed about Far Eastern affairs, and believing that the Japanese troops were still equipped with the primitive weapons of uncivilized nations, considered that the land operations were of little

military consequence. Except in really well-informed quarters, therefore, that exploit attracted only a comparatively limited degree of attention. But battleships and cruisers were among the most highly scientific structures evolved by human effort, and as such formed the instruments of war wherewith the maritime forces of civilized States were themselves provided. The performances of these as yet comparatively untried developments of the fighting ship in actual conflict were in consequence a matter of interest at once even to the Western Powers, and the interest was intensified and accompanied by no small degree of surprise by the realization that not only were these Far Eastern nations in possession of such modern appliances—which had scarcely been properly appreciated before—but that one of them at least obviously understood how to use them.

From a purely professional standpoint the battle evoked much notice as being the first occasion of the extensive use of quick-firing ordnance at ranges which were a great advance on any previous experience, averaging as they did as much as 3,000 yards. No fleet action on a large scale had taken place since the Austrians and Italians had met at Lissa, twenty-eight years previously, and that engagement had been fought at short range with slow-firing guns and mainly won by the Austrian use of the ram. The result gave the ram so fictitious and exaggerated a value in the eyes of a predominant section of naval opinion in every country, that not only was every new ship built thereafter with a ram, but the principle was carried so far that gun armaments were modified and disposed to suit so-called "ramming tactics," and one vessel was built for the British Navy with no weapon at all but her ram and a pair of early-pattern torpedo tubes. And so pertinacious is naval custom that the ram has remained a feature in British battleship designs ever since, although never effective in war except at Lissa, and always intensifying the danger arising from collision with a consort. Its uselessness against modern guns was effectively demonstrated for

the first time at Yalu, for the Chinese vessels engaged by the Japanese light-cruiser division in the second stage of the fight made more than one attempt to ram which was easily frustrated or avoided, and only ended in placing the ship that made it within shatteringly close range of a Japanese broadside of rapid-fire weapons. In that battle the gun alone obtained results, even though it was fought at ranges which were generally much in excess of anything previously imagined. Most of the ships present carried Whitehead torpedoes of the earlier patterns and a fair number of these were fired by the Chinese, but all ran wide of their targets.

Of the Japanese themselves it may be said with truth that the Battle of Yalu awakened them to a consciousness of the possibilities of their own place among the nations for the first time. Any repetition of the humiliations of Kagosima and Shimonoseki was thereafter little to be feared, and from a position of comparative distrust in the popular mind the events of that day raised their navy to a point of the highest esteem, retained ever since. Ito's victory gave birth to a spirit of ambition among young Japanese to serve in the batteries and engine-rooms of their fighting ships, which still enables their naval authorities to pick and choose to a very large extent from among voluntary candidates for that honour. Political criticism was silenced by deeds far exceeding all expectations, and even in times of straitened finances money was thereafter so freely forthcoming for the maintenance of the service, that in a few years it had expanded to the dimensions requisite for the performance of a much more formidable task. But its work against China was by no means yet completed.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CHINO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE FIRST ALLIANCE WITH GREAT BRITAIN

By the victory of the Japanese army at Peng-yang the last vestige of any Chinese hold on Korea was at an end for the time, and Japan was placed in a position not only to secure her own interests and develop her trade in that country, but free from all prospect of active interference in the execution of any scheme of reform in its internal administration which the Japanese authorities might consider necessary. The original cause of hostile operations against the Peking Government had therefore been removed as far as the near future was concerned, and the first phase of the war was at an end.

But up to this point the Japanese had not been able to look beyond the immediate requirements of the situation, and now realized that something more than driving the Chinese out at the first interchange of blows was necessary if their newly acquired ascendancy in Korea was to prove enduring. China, although less than half civilized in the ordinary sense, was yet an empire of enormous resources and great powers of recuperation, under the rule of an autocracy founded on conquest with very tenacious views in regard to its powers and prestige. For these reasons it was absolutely essential to the Japanese future in Korea that their troops should have free access to Korean territory at any time, and, as the sea was a permanent and irremovable feature in the situation, this access could only be rendered certain under all eventualities by the establishment of a maritime superiority over China to last perpetually, or remain at least as permanent as human foresight could ensure.

Obviously the first step towards that end was the

forcible reduction of the Chinese Fleet to a level at least much below the strength of the Navy of Japan, which step was not as yet half accomplished. But the destruction or weakening of the enemy's sea forces would give no more than a promise of Japanese superiority for the few years immediately following. The Chinese might purchase or build a new fleet, and, profiting by the lessons of adversity, take good care to see that in efficiency as well as in other matters it was equal to the duties required of it. Japanese policy had therefore to take into con-

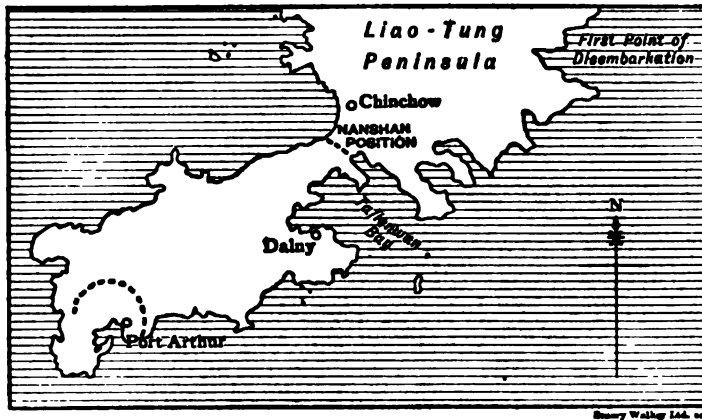


FIG. 5.—PORT ARTHUR PENINSULA AND NEIGHBOURING COASTLINE. GENERAL CIRCLE OF LAND DEFENCES INDICATED BY DOTTED LINE.

sideration all measures helping to consolidate their position, and the only practicable method of preventing China from ever regaining a strong position in the Yellow Sea and northern waters of Asia was to deprive her of any harbours which might serve as bases for her fleet in those regions. Fortunately for Japan, only one harbour exists in that part of Chinese territory with the natural features requisite for a naval headquarters, and that is Port Arthur, but Port Arthur does possess them in a marked degree. Situated within a short steaming distance of the whole western coasts of Korea, completely

encircled by hills offering excellent sites for a chain of defences, and reached only by a narrow and easily held entrance, it furnished the Chinese with an ideal foundation for the establishment of a strong maritime position in the Yellow Sea. Port Arthur did not in itself actually "command" the Yellow Sea, as is sometimes asserted in the loose and inaccurate phraseology used by certain writers in referring to sea fortresses, because a land position can exercise no command over water beyond the range of its own guns—a very insignificant space in comparison with the vast areas involved in maritime warfare. But it did provide a fleet engaged in the endeavour to establish such a command with very great advantages, especially if opposed by a strong and enterprising enemy. To obtain permanent possession of Port Arthur became as a result the immediate object of Japanese policy after compelling the Chinese to release their hold on Korea, and they lost no time in beginning operations with that end in view.

This fine natural harbour stands not far from the extremity of the Liao-tung peninsula, a tongue of land about 120 miles long jutting out to the south-westward from Southern Manchuria between the eastern part of the Gulf of Pe-chi-li and the Bay of Korea. So strongly had it been fortified for the Chinese by German engineers, that any attempt to take it by direct sea attack would certainly have resulted in such losses to the attacking ships as to weaken the Japanese position afloat very seriously, and thus defeat the object of the whole enterprise, which, as already observed, was to secure an immediate and lasting predominance in those waters. Reduction by attack on the land side remained the only possible method of procedure, and the next phase of the war began with that purpose in view, towards the attainment of which all operations were now planned. The one drawback to Port Arthur was that its situation near the end of a long peninsula rendered it easily liable to isolation by an enemy with a sufficient command of the sea to transport an army to any point on this peninsula

in rear of the fortress. And as a relieving force could only move to its help from one direction, its relief was necessarily difficult in proportion. One Japanese army was accordingly detailed to land on the peninsula and capture the fortress, while another moved from Korea into Manchuria as a covering force, to prevent any Chinese attempt at succour. This scheme presented an interesting example of naval and military co-operation for the achievement of a common end. The ultimate purpose of the whole Japanese effort was to ensure the permanency of the maritime superiority which was now passing into their hands, but the navy could not effect this unaided. And so the army was applied to the prosecution of an object which was naval in its nature. But the army could render no assistance unless the navy first secured its passage to the scene of operations in safety. Each service therefore had a distinct and separate rôle to play, but each was dependent on the help of the other and powerless to act alone.

Within a month of their victories at Peng-yang and Yalu the Japanese army destined for the attack was on board the transports, and when ready the large fleet sailed under convoy from a point on the south shore of the Liao-tung peninsula about ninety miles from Port Arthur, near a coast village named Huyuan-kon, where disembarkation began on October 24. At this stage the Japanese committed the only mistake of importance in their whole conduct of the war, a slip arising from over-confidence on the part of their naval authorities. Either acting on his own initiative or under instructions from his Government—but most probably the latter—the Japanese admiral devoted his entire activities towards escorting the army on its passage and supporting it in its advance along the coast of the peninsula, with the result that none of his ships were available for watching Ting in Port Arthur. No sufficient justification existed for any assumption that Ting would necessarily remain there, and Ito was committing the same error as Konishi in leaving the enemy's fleet without attention in order



to act with the Japanese army, to whose work his immediate assistance was by no means indispensable. The safety of the transports could have been equally well assured by keeping a close blockade of Port Arthur with the assistance of his torpedo-boats, and such a blockade would have effected a double purpose. As it was, Ito left the Chinese fleet a chance to escape, which it took. Ting's vessels had been repaired by the end of October and were ready for sea once more. Hearing of the arrival of a Japanese transport fleet off the south coast of the peninsula, he easily divined that an attack on Port Arthur was now a part of the enemy's plan of campaign, and as no Japanese cruisers were visible from his signal station on the heights from day to day, nor even smoke on the horizon, he slipped out with all his ships a few days after the first Japanese troops had waded ashore at Huyuan-kon, and crossed without interference to Wei-hai-wei, where he was protected against any attack from seaward by the guns and mines of a defence only second in strength to Port Arthur itself. This lack of vigilance, or more probably this error of judgment, involved the Japanese in yet another expedition across the water which would otherwise have been quite unnecessary, throwing an additional strain on their resources, and costing the life of many a poor *gunjin* who might have returned after the war in safety to his ricefields or native fishing village.

While one Japanese army was engaged in landing on the muddy shallows of the Liao-tung peninsula and marching thence towards Port Arthur, the troops in Korea crossed the frontier and invaded Southern Manchuria, extending their advance in due course as far west as the Gulf of Pe-chi-li, thus drawing a line right across the neck of the peninsula and holding the only route whereby the Chinese might have despatched succour to the doomed fortress. A third Japanese column moved from Korea towards the Manchurian capital of Mukden. Under these arrangements the Port Arthur force had no anxiety about attack from the rear, and marched along

the coast towards its objective, occupying sundry Chinese towns and villages in its line of advance. The fleet kept abreast of its movements, and the smaller vessels, whose light draught enabled them to stand close inshore, occasionally raked the Chinese positions encountered on the route near the beach, to facilitate their capture by the troops. On November 7, after great exertions in crossing a bad country with no roads worthy of the name, the Japanese army reached Talien-wan Bay, an excellent harbour about twenty-five miles to the eastward of Port Arthur, with batteries and mines defending it to seaward. This fell an easy prey, as the Chinese garrison evacuated the forts before the enemy arrived, and its capture was a great acquisition. The original point of disembarkation had been very unsuitable as a landing-place on account of the outlying shoals which forced the transports to lie many miles from the shore, and moreover the intervening country was so heavy that no siege-train could be taken over it. At Talien-wan, on the other hand, transports could lie close to the landings, and a good road led to Port Arthur. As a plan of the minefield was found in one of the abandoned batteries, these obstacles were easily removed, and some Chinese torpedo-boats in the bay were trapped by the arrival of Ito's vessels outside and forced to surrender. Meanwhile, however, intelligence reached the Japanese admiral that Ting with his fleet had left Port Arthur, and all hopes of capturing him there were consequently at an end. On receipt of this disappointing news, Ito left his immediate occupation and steamed across to Wei-hai-wei, but arrived too late to catch the enemy at sea, nor could he induce the latter to come out by cruising about outside as a challenge. Finding it useless to remain, he returned to render what assistance he might in the final reduction of Port Arthur. In the interval the Japanese army had arrived before the chain of positions on the heights on the land side, and were making their final dispositions for the assault. These were completed by November 20, on which day Marshal Oyama began by driving the defenders from all

the outlying works, but the fleet was unable to render active assistance, and although the thunder of the attack sounded all day long in the ears of the seamen they were forced to remain idly steaming up and down outside. Next morning, however, when the more strenuous work of carrying the main defences formed the work of the day, certain of the ships carried out a long-range bombardment of such forts as lay within their reach, and although this did not produce any decisive effect, the co-operation of the navy was useful in preventing the escape of a portion of the garrison, who, when they found the end was drawing near, retreated in haste in the direction of some fishing craft in which they hoped to get away. One after another the forts were carried, and before the evening the attack had been successful at all points and the surviving defenders had laid down their arms. The work of the expedition was therefore complete so far as the fortress was concerned, in which among other spoils of war the victors captured no less than forty-eight guns of heavy calibre up to 10-inch, in addition to mortars, light ordnance, and field-batteries in large numbers.

But the harbour was an empty sheet of water reflecting nothing but the surrounding hills. This deprived the success of the Japanese arms of much of its immediate value, and the feelings of elation natural to the occasion were mingled with profound regrets as the victors viewed its unbroken surface from the fine vantage of their newly won positions. It would have mattered less if the enemy's vessels had steamed out to be sunk in action. In such a case they would not, indeed, have been taken to Hiroshima Bay in triumph, which was what the Japanese people had hoped, but their destruction would have put an end to much anxiety. Unfortunately for Japan, Ting's fleet was still afloat, and the losses sustained at Yalu had been in part made good by some sloops and coast-defence gunboats, despatched to join him from the southern provinces. He now commanded two battle-ships, two armoured cruisers, twelve light cruisers and

sloops, fourteen torpedo-boats, and six gunboats. Of the battleships, however, the *Chen-yuen* had been damaged by grounding, and could not be repaired at Wei-hai-wei sufficiently to make her useful except as a powerful aid to harbour defence. Nevertheless, the force under his flag was quite enough to be a serious threat to Japan; the more especially as plans for an advance on Peking, by an army to be disembarked on the shores of the Gulf of Pe-chi-li in the spring, were now occupying the staffs at the Japanese Admiralty and War Office. And as the Japanese Government were never believers in the theory that a hostile fleet has been sufficiently disposed of by shutting it up under a blockade if any further steps are practicable towards its total destruction or capture, the pursuit of Ting was started on a new stage. This involved the preparation of another expedition, and as Wei-hai-wei resembled Port Arthur in being too strongly fortified for capture by sea attack, except with the prospect of such heavy losses as would dangerously weaken the Japanese Fleet, the co-operation of their Army was once again necessary in order to reduce it from the land. Japanese policy did not aim at the annexation of Wei-hai-wei itself, which they rightly regarded as having no value comparable to Port Arthur. In proof of this they made no attempt to hold it in force when once in their hands, nor put forward any claim for its permanent transfer under the terms of peace. The harbour, although affording a fairly sheltered anchorage against bad weather or gunfire from seaward, is difficult to defend against torpedo craft, and not well suited by nature as the permanent headquarters of a fleet. To appreciate the proper motives of the Japanese, therefore, it must be understood that this fresh enterprise, in which the Japanese Army was about to bear a most important part, had no further object than the destruction of the fleet inside. This invests it with a somewhat historical interest, differentiating it from the expedition against Port Arthur, in which the capture and retention of the fortress itself was the goal of the Japanese aspirations,

although for a purpose ultimately connected with maritime command, and in the hope that the Chinese fleet might prove to be a part of the booty.

The harbour of Wei-hai-wei is a bay or bight on the north-eastern coast of the Chinese province of Shantung, facing roughly across the entrance to the Gulf of Pe-chi-li. The two fortresses are separated by about eighty-five miles of water, and were sometimes called the gates to Peking, but the term conveys an inaccurate expression even in its metaphorical sense. The only "gate" which can close a stretch of eighty-five miles of the sea is a fleet. But as either of these harbours could provide an admirable supply base to a fleet so employed, they might aptly be described as the *hinges* of such a gate. Statements have been made that the Japanese had intended to attack Wei-hai-wei whether the Chinese fleet was still afloat or not, and that the term "gate" of Peking was officially and advisedly used as a reason for the expedition. That may perhaps be so, but it is neither impossible nor even improbable that this explanation was given to the public, in part at least, to conceal the disappointment of the authorities at having allowed Ting to escape from Port Arthur. It remains, at any rate, certain that transports conveying an army to the Gulf of Pe-chi-li can keep eighty miles clear of Wei-hai-wei if they wish to, and that the guns of the fortress itself could no more prevent an enemy from attacking the Chinese capital than the guns of Wilhelmshaven could have prevented British soldiers from crossing to France. An enterprise undertaken with the object of capturing a position which was no obstacle to their other projects—and which they themselves had no desire to keep—would have represented a waste of effort very unusual with so shrewd a people as the Japanese, who were already engaged in putting forth their utmost strength in other directions. If, indeed, an attack on Wei-hai-wei formed a part of their deliberately adopted plans, irrespective of its maritime aspects, the division of force thereby introduced reflects less credit on the sagacity of their naval and

military war staffs than their other schemes for the conduct of hostilities; and as a soundness of judgment and foresight usually characterized their whole handling of the events and developments of the main situation, it is very difficult to believe that they would have been guilty of such an erroneous appreciation of first principles in overseas war.

In examining the natural features of the harbour of Wei-hai-wei on the chart, it will be seen that the width between the two capes forming its eastern and western extremities is about five and a half miles, but this stretch

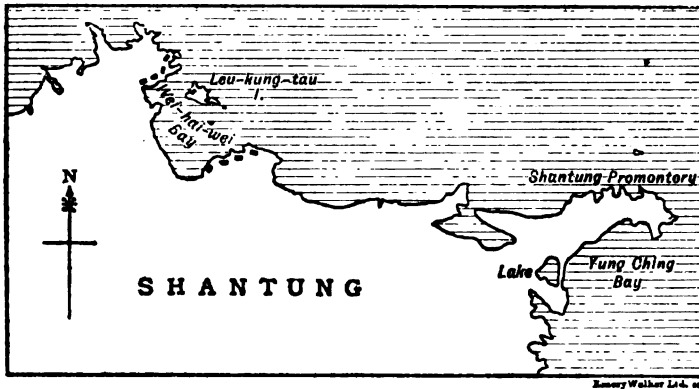


FIG. 6.—WEI-HAI-WEI HARBOUR AND NEIGHBOURING COAST TO YUNG CHING BAY.

Forts indicated thus ----

is broken by the high and precipitous island of Leu-kung-tau, which lies between them and divides the mouth of the bay into two entrances. This island was a special feature in the situation to which there was no parallel at Port Arthur. Behind it a squadron can find complete shelter from the guns of an enemy at sea, or even from his observation, and being an island, it was inaccessible to the Japanese army on the mainland so long as the Chinese ships occupied the intervening waters of the bay. This would have mattered little had it been unfortified, but a powerfully armed battery was situated at each end,

from which the holders of the island were able to fire on ships attempting to enter the bay on either side. Leukung-tau presented, in consequence, a very perplexing factor to the attacking forces on both elements. Of the two entrances between which it lies, the eastern is much the wider, being three miles across, although this span is broken near the centre by another and very small islet, which at that time mounted another battery. The width of this entrance constitutes the principal natural weakness of the harbour, for although its depth of water is insufficient for heavy-draught ships it is ample for torpedo craft, against whose attacks the three-mile stretch from island to shore is very difficult to close—a difficulty which, indeed, the Chinese found insurmountable. The western entrance, on the other hand, though comparatively narrow, is deep enough for the passage of ships of any size, but easily covered by guns at the western end of the island. The bay itself is extensive in area, but too shallow for battleships except at that part which lies just behind and inside the island, and this “pocket” happens to be in deep-water connection with the deep western entrance. Here berthing-space exists for a moderate-sized squadron of large vessels. At or near each of the two promontories or capes enclosing the bay stood, in 1894, a group of defence works heavily armed on their sea-fronts, in which some of the guns could be brought to bear over the waters of the bay itself—and therefore on vessels inside sheltered from seaward—a most important matter to attackers and defenders alike. But these forts were virtually without rear protection, and the thirteen-mile circuit of the bay had no landward defences worthy of mention. This was a totally different state of affairs from that at Port Arthur, and indeed in every respect the work before the troops would have presented much less difficulty than in that previous enterprise had it not been necessary to include the aforesaid island in its scope, towards reaching which the navy could guarantee the army no help at all until they could get into the bay themselves.

The Japanese proposed to land the attacking army at some point on the coast of Shantung, at as short a distance from Wei-hai-wei as was compatible with the requirements of a well-sheltered anchorage for the work of disembarkation, and thence march on the bay and attack the batteries on the capes from the rear. With these in their hands it was hoped that the minefields might be cleared without serious interference from the defence, or at least that the obstacles against torpedo-boat attack might be removed. And they further hoped that, if left by the Chinese in a serviceable condition, some of the guns these batteries contained might be used against the Chinese fleet inside, for which purpose a party of seamen-gunners from the Japanese ships marched with the troops. The work of the fleet was, firstly, to take good care that Ting did not escape again; secondly, to make every effort to destroy the ships by torpedoes; and thirdly, to assist the army attack on the mainland batteries by any long-range bombardment which did not involve undue risk to the vessels so engaged. This scheme furnished another very interesting example of tactical co-operation on both elements, and the lessons it conveys were not obscured by any faults in its execution, which was carried through with a perfect understanding between the respective commanders.

The point selected for landing the troops was Yung-ching Bay, an indentation on the coastline just round the corner of the Shantung promontory from Wei-hai-wei—from the eastern end of which it lay about twenty-four miles distant—well sheltered from the prevailing northerly winds. But before the expedition arrived at this point a preliminary attack of one day's duration was made by a division of the fleet with a few troops on board, as a feint against the town of Tengchow, about eighty miles to the westward. This was intended to draw off the attention of any Chinese field-army near the coast. The main Japanese expedition of 30,000 men arrived in Yung-ching Bay in a large fleet of transports\* on January 30, exactly two months after the fall of Port



Arthur. At the moment the weather happened to be calm, and the disembarkation being admirably organized proceeded most rapidly, so that within a week it was completed and the advance well begun. But being the month of January, during which the climatic conditions of Northern China are something similar to those of a Russian winter, the soldiers and seamen were called upon to face temperatures affording a searching test to the hardiest. The seas and sprays breaking over Ito's ships froze as they fell, till the vessels had some resemblance to icebergs. Cases occurred of lookouts freezing to death at their stations, and the gun-muzzles and gun-ports were so coated and blocked with ice as to cause great trouble in using them. On shore the columns tramped for mile after mile in the teeth of bitter snowstorms over a bleak, desolate land, offering neither shelter nor firewood, and required all the fortitude they could summon to endure the arctic temperature of their exposed bivouacs at night.

Before the end of the month, nevertheless, the troops had reached and attacked the group of batteries near the point marking the eastern end of the bay, these being the first to be encountered in their line of advance. Those on the western cape were sixteen miles farther on. The resistance of the enemy was not very serious, and considerable help towards the capture of the outermost forts was afforded by a preliminary flank bombardment from some of the Japanese ships outside. But two of the lighter draught Chinese vessels in the bay moved down to the eastern part and shelled the Japanese troops in a position from which they could make no reply, causing some loss and a temporary evacuation of one of the less important captured works. Matters were in this condition when the month of February was ushered in by a violent gale and snowstorm lasting for two days, which brought all movements on land to a standstill, and forced the Japanese fleet to seek shelter under the lee of the Shantung promontory. This was Ting's last and greatest opportunity, which a strong and resolute man would

have grasped. With the wind in the northerly quarter a gale was no obstacle to an escape in the other direction, where his only remaining chance of safety lay. Once round the eastern point of Shantung he might have headed away southward, and with a good start reached the Yang-tse-kiang, up which he could easily have taken his whole force till above the powerful Woosung forts, or even 100 miles farther still, where the Japanese could only have followed at very grave risk. At the worst he would have been brought to action and might have involved some of the enemy's vessels in the same fate as his own before being sunk. It must have been a very anxious forty-eight hours for Ito, for a second escape of the Chinese Fleet would have caused great disappointment and irritation in Japan. There seems to be good reason for believing that Ting had positive orders from Peking not to go out—very probably inspired by the Empress Dowager—but this was one of the cases in which a really great leader takes the situation into his own hands whatever his orders from higher authority may be. A capacity for insubordination on a grand scale is a rare quality, however, and Ting was not a Nelson or a Yi-sun. And so he allowed the chance to pass—thereby committing an error of the kind that war does not forgive—and continued to await the inevitable fate of his fleet with the passive courage of a man who foresees certain disaster, but none of the spirit which makes for success when an enemy is knocking at the gate. By February 3 the gale had blown itself out; Ito was once more on the watch, which he never again relaxed till the end, and the guns in the captured eastern batteries were ready for use against the Chinese ships inside. The Japanese troops had resumed their advance round the bay towards the western group of defences, which they reached in a day's marching and easily occupied. These batteries were sited within close range of the anchorage where the Chinese ships lay under the island, unlike the eastern group, which were very nearly out of range of that anchorage altogether. But here

Ting did take at least one strong and sensible step. From the very beginning he urged the officer commanding the shore defences to destroy his guns if unable to hold his positions, but the latter declined the responsibility, declaring it might cost him his head. As a consequence the armaments in the eastern batteries were captured intact, but just before the Japanese reached the western group, and while the garrisons were already moving out, Ting sent a party ashore who disabled every gun they contained. These forts, therefore, were not the immediate danger to the Chinese vessels which they would otherwise have been in the enemy's hands.

But this was after all no more than one of the last shifts of a trapped and fated force, affording at most a brief respite from certain destruction. On February 4 the Japanese ring of investment was complete, and only the island and the fleet continued to fly the Chinese national flag. The defence now entered on its last throes, and a week crowded with disaster to the Chinese arms followed. The capture of the eastern batteries enabled the Japanese to remove some of the obstructions to the entrance of torpedo craft on that side, thereby rendering it possible for their flotilla to get in and strike the finishing blows. Ito was not slow to profit by the chance, and the officers and men of that branch of his command were ardently desirous of the opportunity to distinguish themselves, not having participated in the honours won at Yalu. From February 4 a series of night attacks were accordingly launched which soon reduced the Chinese squadron to less than half a dozen sea-going ships, exclusive of torpedo-boats. The flagship was the very first victim. These attacks were carried through on very dark nights under trying conditions of weather and navigation. So intense was the cold that men died of exposure on the decks of the attacking boats, and in some cases the torpedoes were frozen into the tubes and could not be discharged at the critical moment when the boats had arrived close to the ships after dashing in under a hail of shells. Only two of the flotilla were actually lost,

however, although the others suffered varying degrees of damage. On February 7 Ting appears to have decided to give his own torpedo flotilla a chance to escape. Fourteen of these boats—which if handled and used like their “opposite numbers” in their enemy’s service should have been a source of constant apprehension to the Japanese all through the war—accordingly dashed out at their utmost speed on that day, but only two got clear away, all the remainder being caught or sunk by the Japanese cruisers. One of the few remaining Chinese vessels, in attempting to engage the Japanese seamen in the captured eastern batteries, was also sunk by a long shot.

By February 11 the situation of the defenders was hopeless. When the Chinese flagship was sunk Ting had been rescued and went on board her sister battleship the *Chen-yuen*, but, as already observed, this vessel was in a damaged condition herself. Of his original command only four sea-going craft in a serviceable condition now remained, nor was it possible to hope that the enemy would leave these afloat for more than a day or two longer. Entirely surrounded by his foes on land and water, his own countrymen offered him no prospect of assistance or relief, and as the Japanese held a close grip on all his sources of supply any prospect of replenishing his ammunition, fuel, or food was at an end. Of the land defences to which he had looked for protection every fort and battery was in Japanese hands, except those on the island which were cut off from support like himself. Having exhausted his resources and passed the period when a sortie with all the force at his disposal might have offered a prospect of success, he realized that final destruction was at hand and decided to avoid further bloodshed by surrender. He sent out to Ito, therefore, on February 12, offering to capitulate, provided that the lives of his men might be spared. This was just twenty-three days after the first landing of the Japanese at Yung-ching. Ito replied that he would not only spare their lives, but give them their liberty, and on receiving that

answer Ting ordered his ships and the island forts to haul down their flags.

But he knew that by his defeat his own life and that of his principal subordinates—if not indeed all his officers and men—was forfeited to his own Sovereign by the custom of his country, and was well aware that a merciless spirit ruled the councils at Peking, where the vindictive and utterly unprincipled old Empress Dowager held the reins of power in a firm and capable grasp. On issuing the command to surrender, therefore, he retired to his cabin, where he drank off a fatal dose of opium and was found dead in his chair, an example which was followed by his captains and the few military officers of senior rank on the island. "The Japanese, on taking possession, were moved to admiration by this occurrence, so much in accordance with the spirit of the *Samurai*, and accorded the dead Commander-in-Chief against whom they had been waging honourable war the full funeral honours of a flag officer, sending his remains to Chefoo in one of the captured ships of his own squadron, under an admiral's salute in minute guns from the whole Japanese fleet with colours at half-mast. The surviving defenders of all ranks were then given their liberty, but received less generous treatment from their own country than from their enemies, for an order was sent down from Peking to the Chinese Governor of Shantung that all these unfortunate men were to suffer death. Ting himself is entitled to some commiseration. His personal honour was always above reproach, but a burden was laid on his shoulders which he was not strong enough to carry. From a professional standpoint he lacked the knowledge necessary for the heavy responsibility of commanding a fleet in war, and no really expert assistance was ever at his disposal. During the first phase of hostilities his chief adviser had been a German artillery major, and when that officer was withdrawn for other duties, the Chinese Government, by an offer of high pay, obtained the services of a Scotch master of a steamer engaged in coastal trade under the British flag, to whom

they gave the rank of admiral. The German major was an expert in gunnery, but knew next to nothing about ships. The Scotch "admiral," on the other hand, knew all about navigation and the vessels of the kind to which he was accustomed, but nothing about war. Neither had any acquaintance with the first principles of naval strategy, nor of the tactical handling of a fleet, nor yet of the proper duties of the various types of ships of which a fleet is made up. In spite of these handicaps, however, Ting might have exercised a very material influence on the whole course of the war if he could have summoned up the resolution to ignore the intermeddling of the Pekin Council and attacked the Japanese fleet on its first arrival on the coast of Korea, where it suffered under the great drawback of possessing no defended anchorage for coaling and other purposes, and where he might have engaged at his own selected moment under conditions of advantage. Even if unsuccessful, the mere fact that he had assumed the offensive must necessarily have produced its effect on the Japanese plans, compelling them to exercise much greater caution in moving their forces by sea, and in all probability delaying the whole progress of their scheme of operations. Moreover, from the first Ting's men were in need of the heartening up which an attacking strategy always inspires, even in crews of poor quality, and nothing could have been worse for their already indifferent *moral* than the policy of constantly sheltering inactive in harbour. The Chinese admiral no doubt conducted his share of the war under the double difficulty of undue interference from higher authority and the command of a force of inferior fighting temper to the enemy. But so did Yi-sun, who triumphed in spite of both, because inspired by the real genius of a great personality.

With the fall of Wei-hai-wei the Japanese received the surrender of the remnant of the Chinese fleet, consisting of a battleship, an armoured cruiser, and a light cruiser, a sloop, and a few coast-defence gunboats. All these were added to their own service, to which the *Chen-yuen*

was a notable addition, as their first modern battleship, with a fitness to lie in the line of which they themselves had received plenty of evidence. The light cruiser had a somewhat notable if not altogether glorious past career, having been the successful escaper of the pair engaged by Tsuboi in the opening action of the war, and having also survived at Yalu because her captain had steamed away to Port Arthur, while his consorts were fighting. Finally, she was the only light cruiser to remain afloat to the end at Wei-hai-wei. The ordnance of the fortress had been partly disabled by Ting, as already observed, and of the remaining guns some were destroyed by the Japanese and others removed. The defences originally mounted an armament of much the same strength as those at Port Arthur, including some 10-inch Krupps. When the transfer of the surrendered ships and the island was complete the Japanese left a small temporary garrison of occupation in the latter and re-embarked the main expedition. Provisional repairs were executed on the damaged *Chen-yuen* of a nature sufficient to take her to Japan for permanent refit.

By the complete annihilation of the Chinese fleet and the acquisition of its only possible base in the northern waters of the Far East, Japan had reached the consummation of her maritime ambitions in her rivalry with China. She was now free for the first time in her history to invade a hostile territory not only without incurring any risk to her own soil, but under conditions which threatened no repetition of disasters such as ruined the Japanese projects of conquest in the sixteenth century; and could in future select her own time and place for further attack, as far as the whole long coastline of her enemy was concerned, under no restrictions except those imposed by its hydrographic features. As to this particular war, therefore, the fighting work of her navy was necessarily at an end, although its ships might be called upon to assist in the transport and disembarkation duties, or the other strenuous but unhazardous occupations which fall on a fleet in an overseas campaign when

the first great step of securing the safety of communications has been accomplished. No further fighting proved to be necessary, however, on either element. The next movement would have been directed against Pekin, but as the Peiho River usually remains frozen till the middle of March—in that year the ice did not break up till the 21st—no actual operations could be taken in hand in that direction for at least a month after the surrender of Wei-hai-wei. But by this time the Imperial Council in the Chinese capital had been thoroughly disillusioned of their confidence in their ability to deal with Japan, and were ready to accept almost any conditions to avert the crowning humiliation of a hostile occupation of their metropolis and seat of government. They decided, therefore, on the final destruction of their fleet, to open negotiations for peace, and after certain preliminaries the Japanese agreed to receive a diplomatic mission headed by Li-Hung-Chang, who was invested with plenipotentiary powers to arrange the terms on which hostilities should be ended. This was settled so expeditiously that a treaty—virtually dictated by the Japanese representatives—was signed at Shimonoseki on April 17. Thus the first great triumph of Japan received its seal and confirmation on the very scene of her last humiliating but beneficial lesson at the hands of foreign enemies only thirty years before, and the remarkable contrast between the two events aptly illustrated Japanese progress in that interval.

The first article of the new treaty recognized the complete independence of Korea, which China was never again to claim as a tributary. As this pretension had been the root cause of all the trouble, the main motive of Japanese policy had been to compel its definite relinquishment. Thereafter neither China nor any other country could send troops to Korea except as an act of war, and the position of the latter was further safeguarded by the second clause, which ceded to Japan the Liao-tung peninsula and that part of Southern Manchuria from which it projects, as well as the Manchurian area



bordering on the Korean frontier. Under such an arrangement no enemy could reach Korea except by sea, or by marching across territory under the Japanese flag, and it was the aim of the Government at Tokio that Korea should be encircled by a Japanese zone on the land and by Japanese naval power on the water. The transfer of the Liao-tung peninsula deprived China of any possible naval headquarters north of the Yang-tse-kiang, and the possession of Port Arthur which it gave to Japan provided the latter with a maritime base in a very advantageous strategic position. Thenceforward China could only use her southern ports, such as Foochow, as the standing headquarters and repairing depot of any fleet that the Peking authorities might create to replace their losses. But even that eventuality was not overlooked by the treaty, for the third clause ceded Formosa and the Pescadores Islands to Japan, of which the latter are well placed and well suited to provide a war anchorage for a naval force engaged in operating on the southern coasts of China. In addition to the above transfers of territory China agreed to pay an indemnity covering the whole cost of the war and to grant Japan certain fresh commercial facilities. Everything that the Japanese had fought to attain had therefore passed to their hands with a great deal in addition. But their material gains were by no means all. The exploits of their forces had excited a degree of surprise among the Powers of the world which might, without exaggeration, be described as sensational, and the bare facts were in themselves sufficiently remarkable to account for the astonishment they caused. Two Governments had gone to war. Each ruled over an Asiatic race of Mongolian extraction, but one of these was at least ten times as numerous as the other—a disproportion equal to that between the populations of Germany and Belgium. Yet it was the dwarf that had thrown the giant in the struggle, and holding his opponent down with one hand had taken what he wanted from him with the other.

It became evident that Japan had been progressing

comparatively unnoticed towards a place among those nations whose existence and rights must be recognized and treated with respect. Ultimatums might be presented to China by the Powers in the West, and concessions extorted without much fear of the consequences, even although the Chinese people equalled in numbers the whole population of Europe. But the course of this war had indicated plainly enough that no such attitude could be maintained towards the subjects of the Japanese Emperor, even though no more numerous than the inhabitants of the British Isles. True, they were on the eve of receiving a most unwelcome intimation from Europe at that very time, but this was only placed before them after receiving the signatures of a combination whose united strength ashore and afloat was such that no country in the world could have opposed it single-handed. This was a widely different procedure from that previously adopted by Governments in Europe when dealing with an Asiatic State; and it was something altogether new to the experience of the Cabinets of that day to find an Eastern people displaying a formidable aptitude in the use of modern weapons. In the Middle Ages the East was on a level with the West in a knowledge of war, as the Saracens, Turks, and Tartars had proved; but when Europe began to apply the resources of the workshop and the laboratory to the requirements of fleets and armies, and war became a science rather than an art, Asia had gradually dropped behind, and by the nineteenth century the difference had become so marked that no Oriental State counted as even a second-rate Power. The belief had long been general in the West that, although Asiatics might be trained to carry out the rank-and-file duties of a scientifically equipped fighting force passably well, they could never of their own unaided effort produce modern instruments of war or grapple with the complex administration which their proper use demands. Least of all was it ever suspected that they would prove competent to handle and fight a modern fleet, for no Eastern races except the Turks

had ever been a real maritime Power as compared to the Europeans of the same era. From the sixteenth century onward the ensigns of the great European navies were commonly seen in Eastern seas; but if the Turks be excepted, no Asiatic war-vessel had ever dropped her anchor in a harbour of Europe since the days of the Phœnicians. The Japanese, however, upset all these beliefs in a campaign waged on both elements within the space of seven months, and for the first time for centuries the combatants of an Asiatic State took rank among the real fighting forces of the globe.

Unfortunately for the Japanese, their successes awakened apprehension as well as surprise in quarters where ambitious schemes had long been cherished towards the Far East. The publication of the Treaty of Shimonoseki was followed very promptly by the despatch of a joint note from Russia, France, and Germany to Japan, intimating that as these three Powers did not consider it conducive to the interests of the world that China should be deprived of territory, the clause providing for the transfer of the Liao-tung peninsula and part of Manchuria to the Japanese flag must be deleted. The profound surprise and anger which this sudden announcement caused in Japan may be easily understood, and as far as Russia and Germany were concerned the deliberate dishonesty of advancing such a pretext for interference was soon made evident, from the fact that each of these Powers themselves a very few years later acquired large areas from the Pekin Government by scarcely veiled threats of force, nominally on "leaseholds," but actually under conditions which gave all the advantages of full ownership. In the case of Russia the concession included Port Arthur itself. The Japanese had been under no illusion from the first, however, as to what motives really lay behind the apparent sympathy of the Russian Government for China. They knew well enough that the ambition of the Tsar and his advisers aimed at acquiring a dominant position on the shores of the North-Western Pacific, which must sooner or later become a vital matter

to Japan. And they knew also that France could only obtain the support of Russia in Europe by endorsing Russian policy everywhere else. It came as no great surprise in consequence to find France associated with a measure doubtless originated in St. Petersburg. But to find Germany also a party to the conspiracy was quite another matter. The belief had existed in Japan that Germany and Russia stood on opposite sides of the political fence, separated by a rooted racial antipathy. To some extent, therefore, the Japanese understood that the Germans and themselves occupied common ground, and their resentment at such treatment from Berlin was proportionately bitter and lasting. For the time they were compelled to yield to *force majeure*. But the opportunity for retaliation came in due course, and by a notable case of retributive justice the two Powers who deliberately violated that very integrity of China on which they had founded their arbitrary opposition to Japan were in the end compelled by Japan herself to yield the last square foot of the territory filched in this way.

Of the many blunders committed by the German Foreign Office during the theatrical reign of Wilhelm II. the quite unnecessary alienation of Japanese friendship was by no means the least, for it made a potential enemy out of a possible ally, whose support might have gone far to save Germany thirty years later. In 1894 the whole Japanese Army and a large section of the educated public regarded the German Empire with great admiration. German victories over other nations were still comparatively recent, and the steadily increasing power of German influence in every quarter of the globe impressed national opinion in many countries remote from Europe. Good authority supports the common belief that an offensive and defensive alliance between the Kaiser and the Emperor of Japan would have been well received by the Japanese people after the war against China, if Berlin had shown any readiness to respond; and the fruits of such a compact must have affected the whole history of the world to an incalculable

degree at a later period. Stupendous events have followed each other in such rapid succession since that time, that the minds of men have been too fully occupied with passing occurrences to reflect on the situation which would have confronted the Entente in 1914 if the keen-edged Japanese sword had been drawn on the Kaiser's side. But a glance at the sombre picture which the supposition presents is pertinent to our subject, and perhaps has not received the general attention it deserves. A bare statement of a few incontrovertible facts will suffice.

In the first place, the outbreak of war under such conditions would have compelled the British Government to choose between weakening their hold on the North Sea or permitting the commercial flags of the Entente to be swept from every sea east of Suez; for the Japanese Fleet was more than a match for the squadrons in Eastern waters of all other Powers put together. But hardly any choice would really have existed in the matter, for the British control of the North Sea was absolutely vital to the whole situation, and no reduction of the force stationed there would have been permissible. With the Japanese Fleet in a position of unrivalled supremacy in the East, the loss of trade would only have been a first blow, however, for nothing would have stood in the way of the despatch of a Japanese army of a million men to invade India, and another such army to attack Australasia. Far from sending valuable help to the Mother-Country in Europe, British possessions on that side of the world would have been in dire need of assistance themselves with no hope of obtaining it. Possibly, when Italy entered the war, the situation in the East might have been retrieved by the liberation of the French Fleet from the sole responsibility of watching the Austrian Navy in the Adriatic, but by that time irremediable disaster would have fallen on the Eastern portions of the British Empire, and very probably the French flag would have vanished from Indo-China as well. Or perhaps, on the other hand, the Japanese might have selected Siberia as a point of attack, and thereby compelled the Russians

to weaken their position in Europe in order to defend their territories in Asia, at the very time when their presence in force on the German and Austrian frontiers was easing the pressure on the Allied armies in France. Even if it be supposed that Japan had elected to remain neutral, the effect on the war must have been very unfavourable to the enemies of Germany. Troops and ships in sufficient numbers for the formidable task of reducing Kiao-chau would then have had to be provided by Great Britain, for by no possibility could such an excellent base for commerce destroyers remain in the enemy's hands. And von Spee might have worked with much less danger, and turned westward instead of east, for his fear of the Japanese Fleet did more to drive him out of the Pacific than anything else. But Japan had no mind to remain neutral. The lasting affront offered to her national self-respect when Germany gratuitously joined the two other Powers—whose immediate interests in opposing Japan were at least obvious—could not remain unavenged if any opportunity for vindicating Japanese honour should arise, and in 1914 the opportunity came. Japan accordingly threw her weight into the scale against the Central Powers. This enabled Great Britain to receive material help from Colonial sources without fear of leaving her distant possessions in danger. It wrenched from the Germans their only real stronghold facing the Pacific. It forced the most powerful hostile squadron outside European waters to seek safety in a withdrawal ending in disaster. It placed large supplies of arms and munitions at the disposal of the Western Powers. And lastly, it afforded active and important protection to the movements of troops against the risk of raiders in the Eastern seas, and assisted to defend Allied interests in the highly dangerous waters of the Mediterranean.

To return, however, to the events of 1895. When the three Great Powers who decided to interfere with the Treaty of Shimonoseki were conducting their preliminary discussions among themselves they approached Great

Britain with a view to obtaining support. But the British Government declined to be in any way associated with the project, and by the statesman-like and long-sighted attitude thus taken up secured benefits to British interests in the East of a far-reaching and durable nature. This abstention received immediate recognition and appreciation from Japan, and from that day Great Britain stood in a category apart from all other countries in the estimation of the Japanese people. It must not be supposed, however, that the action of Downing Street on that occasion was based on nothing more stable than an altruistic sympathy with Japanese national aspirations, for that was by no means the case. Russian ambitions in the Far East constituted a steadily growing menace to British trade in those regions difficult to counteract, and the situation occasioned much anxiety to the British Foreign Office. Hence British and Japanese interests on the coasts of the North-West Pacific, if not equal in degree, lay at least in the same direction, and the progress of events increasingly emphasized the advisability of recognizing this in some definite form. For the first five years after the Chino-Japanese War no developments arose of so pronounced a nature as to bring the policies of the two Governments into actual union, but in the closing year of the nineteenth century incidents passed rendering the further postponement of a mutually helpful agreement in a specified and binding form undesirable to either. In that year the Boxer Rebellion in China and the siege of the foreign legations in Peking forced the condition of affairs in the Far East very prominently before the notice of every State of importance in the world, and the necessary co-operation of eight Governments in restoring order from chaos compelled them all in some degree to disclose their hands in regard to their individual policy towards China. It became evident that the Russians were bent on obtaining Chinese goodwill for some ulterior purpose of their own, for they withdrew from the Council of the Powers when the latter decided on the exaction of penalties from the

Pekin authorities, and this attitude was suggestive of intentions of a nature to threaten British trade very seriously and Japanese interests of every kind. Port Arthur with the Liao-tung peninsula had already been "leased" to Russia three years before, and although the white flag with the blue cross of St. Andrew was not yet in a dominating position in the North Pacific, the building programme of the Russian Admiralty pointed to the conclusion that some such ambition inspired the Russian authorities, especially as the fortifications and dockyards of Port Arthur were being reconstructed and enlarged. The prospect therefore demanded increasing vigilance with a common line of policy, and as the diplomatic correspondence passing between London and Tokio indicated an agreement of views on all cardinal points, the foundation was ready for a definite convention to give that policy effect. On this basis of mutual interests was established the treaty made public in January, 1902, which formed the first of a series of such compacts each more complete and extensive than the last.

The first article of this treaty disclaimed any aggressive intentions towards China or Korea on the part of either signatory, but recognized that each had the right to take such measures as were indispensable to safeguard its own interests if threatened in those parts by the action of any other Power or by local disturbances. Each signatory, therefore, gave the other a free hand to look after its own position in China and Korea, and thus pledged itself to abstain from any political interference of the nature whereby Japan had been deprived of Port Arthur seven years previously. Herein lay highly important matter, but the second and third articles, nevertheless, contained the real kernel of the agreement, for whereas the first only promised non-interference, these next two promised under certain eventualities active assistance. Their terms announced to the world that if either party to the Alliance was engaged in defending the interests mentioned in the first clause in such a way as to involve it in war with an outside Power, the other



party to the Alliance would keep the ring, and forcibly prevent the outsider from receiving help. By this provision Japan was secured for the future against standing alone to face any such combination as that which had mutilated the Treaty of Shimonoseki. And Great Britain stood to gain much indirectly. As long as the Japanese felt that their efforts and sacrifices were liable to be thrown away by an interference too strong to be resisted they were little likely to offer active opposition to any Power following a predatory policy in the East, such as Russia or Germany. But once secured from such arbitrary intervention, their own interests would soon stimulate them to take up a strong line, in a direction that must benefit every country with trading and financial commitments in the threatened regions, except the aggressor. And of all such countries there was none so much concerned in these matters as Great Britain.

The treaty was not without its critics, nevertheless. Some based their opposition on the theory—widely held at that time among a certain class of politicians, although contrary to the teachings of history—that Great Britain should keep out of “entangling alliances.” Others contended that the British Government were making a poor exchange, on the grounds that the Japanese triumph over China was no real indication that the victor must be regarded as a Power of consequence. These were obliged to admit that Japanese methods afforded evidence of good organization and a grasp of sound principles, but asserted that the result was quite as much due to Chinese inefficiency as to any dangerous skill in the thrust of Japan. Many expressed the opinion that the outcome of a conflict between two Asiatic nations was no guide to the probable ending of a conflict between Asiatics and Europeans. These critics held views about the supposed inferior *moral* of all but the white races, and asserted that the Japanese would court disaster if they ever attempted to face a Western Power such as Russia single-handed—a belief shared by some at least

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of the European naval and military attachés to the legations at Tokio, perhaps by all. In the military circles of Continental Europe this conviction was widely prevalent, and the great German General Staff, supposed by many people to be infallible in all that regarded war, derisively refused to entertain the idea of Japan crossing swords with any European Power of importance. But subsequent events proved that the acumen of the German General Staff was not of a high order, and their views are not shared by everybody. An article appeared by an anonymous naval writer in a certain well-known London review two years before Russia and Japan actually came to grips, which not only predicted the war itself, but foretold its main course of events with considerable accuracy, especially as regards the operations on the sea.

Supporters and critics were agreed, however, on one point. The Alliance must depend on its naval and not on its military foundation if it was to stand at all. If the policy of Japan was again thwarted by a combination of Russia, France, and Germany, then Great Britain was bound to step in. On land the forces of such a combination would have outnumbered the forces of the Alliance by something like twelve to one. Fortunately the Allies were separated by deep water from all possible enemies, and thus the overwhelming preponderance of their rivals on land could not be brought to bear against them. On the sea no such disparity existed, and the fleets of any reasonably possible combination in Europe would have been little superior, if at all, to the joint maritime strength of the Allies. Neither France nor Germany could act effectively in the Far East unless the way by sea was clear, and neither was anxious to support Russian ventures to the point of incurring real risk unless on a vital matter. Even Russia could only despatch a part of her enormous army to fight at a distance of many thousand miles from Europe, by a land route and one line of railway. The whole Alliance, therefore, rested on the fleets of the partners, which was recognized by both in their plans for its

maintenance. No detailed scheme for a land campaign was drawn up, and no British troops were definitely appropriated as an army for the Far East. But the dispositions of the Allied navies in the event of war were worked out to the last detail, and a joint system of manœuvring was prepared whereby an admiral belonging to either service could take command of a mixed force of British and Japanese ships and handle them as one fleet in action. Full arrangements were drawn up for co-ordinating the two Admiralty administrations, including the pooling of war-supplies, the exchange of docking plans, and the drafting of secret orders, to be kept in readiness for issue in both Admiralties and revised in consultation from year to year to meet developments and changes in the situation as they arose.

The document which was published to the world on January 30, 1902, must always remain noteworthy as the first instance of a standing alliance for the purpose of mutual defence between a European and an Asiatic State in all history, for although Great Britain and France had fought side by side with Turkey in 1854, the co-operation only lasted for the duration of hostilities and did not represent a permanent partnership. And the Alliance of 1902 must also remain historically interesting as the first on record between two Empires whose respective home territories and capitals are both unapproachable by any enemy except by the sea. By defeating China on both elements the Japanese took an initial step towards a place among the great nations. By entering into a standing alliance with the first maritime Power in the world they achieved a second. But to progress farther towards a definitely established position as such, or even to hold the place already attained, they were soon to find the most difficult task of all.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME WAR .

FOR a proper appreciation of the causes of the principal political currents in Far Eastern affairs at the beginning of the twentieth century, an understanding of the main outline of Russian history in those regions is necessary. Some remarks on that subject are therefore essential as a prelude to any detailed study of the great events which followed, when Japan threw down the gage of battle to the ruler whose millions of subjects inhabited a vaster area in both Europe and Asia than those of any other State.

In the sixteenth century, at the time when Hideyoshi was occupied with his schemes for the conquest of China, the germ of the greatest menace that ever threatened Japan was taking root in the Far West of Asia all unsuspected by the Japanese people, who at that time had never even heard of the country to which this menace owed its existence. Towards the end of that century the Cossack leader Yermak crossed the Caspian from Russia, and, having conquered a large territory on its farther shore, rendered it up to the Tsar Ivan III. as a ransom for his own life, which was under forfeit for brigandage and robbery. The land so ceded to the Crown was the foundation of the enormous Russian Empire in Asia, and from that date onwards the Russian pioneers never called a halt. Advancing without haste, but without rest, steadily across the whole continent, they drove the nomadic tribes before them year after year and generation after generation until by the seventeenth century they reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the desolate steppes of Kamschatka, and crossing the

Behring Strait established themselves in Alaska, which was later sold to the United States. The Romanoff Tsars therefore inherited a territory exceeding even that conquered by Jenghiz Khan, in the matter of longitude, for whereas his dominions extended from the Pacific to the Caspian, theirs reached from the Pacific to the Baltic, and the Russian flag flew over every meridian of an unbroken stretch of *terra firma* with a span of 5,000 miles from west to east.

But it differed materially from the Mongolian Empire in one important respect, for its southern limits remained at all points far from the sea, and its coastlines lay only on the north and the extreme east and west, where winter's ice bound them for a great part of every year. The one outlet to warm water not closed by Nature annually in this way led through the Dardanelles, and there a political barrier, upheld by all the principal States of Europe, prevented the passage of Russian ships of war, if not of merchantmen. Nowhere in Asia, therefore, could Russian vessels, whether naval or mercantile, enter or leave a port of their own in the winter months, although half of Asia was owned by Russia, and nowhere in either continent did this immense empire possess a naval headquarters suitable as a base for ocean-going fleets throughout the year. It was not an unnatural result of such conditions that from an early period in Russian history the one feature in Russian foreign policy which never changed was a perpetual effort to reach an ice-free stretch of coast at some point containing at least one good harbour, and although Russian ambitions to hold the Dardanelles never waned, they were always anxious as a supplementary measure to press towards a sea outlet in Asia. When Peter the Great founded the city which bears his name on the Neva, he declared that he had "opened a Russian window on to Europe," and every one of his successors hoped to signalize his own reign by opening another towards the south and the sun. Under the conditions existing during the latter half of the nineteenth century the line of least resistance for such

a movement lay through Chinese territory. Russia's constant straining towards the sea in ice-free latitudes became in consequence a permanently disturbing factor in the equilibrium of Far Eastern politics.

From the middle of the nineteenth century the boundary between Chinese and Russian territory was definitely marked by the Amur River, running roughly due eastward—allowing for natural windings—until the last 700 miles of its course, where it turns sharply to the northward before emptying into the large bay of the Pacific known as the Sea of Okhotsk. At this northward bend the frontier line was carried across the river eastward and southward to the coast, so that for some distance to the south of the river-mouth the shores of Asia were Russian territory, and on this part lay the fine natural harbour of Vladivostok, the headquarters and supply base of the Russian Pacific fleet. But, as already observed, this was not an ice-free port, and the Russian authorities constantly kept their eyes turned towards the Yellow Sea farther to the south, especially on its eastern arm extending between Korea and the Liao-tung peninsula. To establish a footing on its shores, they began in 1898 by obtaining from Peking, under practical compulsion, a "lease" of part of the Liao-tung peninsula itself, which included Port Arthur. Neither France nor Germany raised any protest against a spoliation of that kind by a powerful European neighbour, although ready enough to denounce such action when carried out by a small and far-distant country from which they had nothing to fear. This acquisition was well situated for Russian requirements, but suffered under the serious drawback of being cut off from the main Russian territory to the northward by the great easternmost block of the Chinese Empire known as Manchuria. To annex this area, or at least to obtain a military right of way across it, became in consequence the problem for which they ardently sought a solution. Their first step towards that end was the construction of a branch line joining Port Arthur through Manchuria with their main railway

across Siberia to Vladivostok, a section of which itself ran, by permission extorted from the Chinese Government, through Northern Manchuria to avoid a long detour in difficult Siberian country. Both these lines were ostensibly laid with Chinese assent, although whether that was obtained by threats or secret compensation, or both, none but those who took part in the transactions ever knew. Railways through alien country are, however, at best a slender and unreliable form of connection in times of emergency or unrest, and the Russian Government only regarded these lines as provisional and temporary measures towards a full and recognized ownership of the land through which they passed. Meanwhile they were pressing on with the other branches of their general scheme for a maritime domination in the East. A large naval building programme was in progress for the Russian Government for several years before the end of the nineteenth century, partly in Russian dockyards and partly under private contracts elsewhere. As ship after ship was completed and commissioned she sailed for the North Pacific and arrived in due course at Port Arthur to reinforce the fleet on that station, so that before the opening of the twentieth century not even Great Britain held so strong a position east of the Mediterranean.

The Boxer Rebellion in China afforded the Russians the first pretext for sending troops into Manchuria in large numbers. While co-operating loyally enough with the international army in the seizure and occupation of Peking, they were engaged at the same time in despatching garrisons to all the principal points along their eastern railways, ostensibly as a precaution in case the insurrection should spread; so that when the situation had been restored to order in the Chinese capital and its surrounding districts, the eastern province of that empire was completely under Russian military domination. Protests from other Powers arose, and the Russian Government promised after some procrastination to withdraw their troops, but very few were actually moved, and the military occupation was supplemented by the planting

of Russian settlers along the land traversed by the railways, the forcible extension of Russian trade, and the general Russianization of the whole region. To those conversant with Russian methods of expansion and penetration it was evident that the Tsar's Government had no intention whatever of quitting Manchuria, but regarded their occupation of that province as a first step towards formal possession, which they hoped to effect at a later date by methods to be settled when the time came. Nor in that respect did they differ much from the attitude taken up by the leaders of policy in the past history of other countries in similar cases. But this prospect threatened the commercial interests of several Powers whose subjects were engaged in business in the East, and notably those of Great Britain, the United States, and Japan. France and Germany, although not altogether unaffected, both wished to keep on good terms with Russia, and as their mercantile activities were more developed in Chinese regions farther to the south, the menace to their trade arising from a Russian acquisition of Manchuria was not a matter of sufficient importance from their standpoint to justify a strong policy of opposition.

But Japan was deeply concerned in the strategic and political aspects of the matter as well as the economic. A Russian Manchuria would mean the permanent establishment of a first-class naval and military State in an excellent situation for the exercise of sea power in the North-West Pacific, by joining up the invaluable naval base at Port Arthur in direct land communication with the Russian metropolis and main centres of production. Until that was accomplished Port Arthur remained a disconnected though highly essential part of the whole scheme. A Russian Manchuria would also extinguish the last hope of the Japanese towards attaining a position of influence in Far Eastern affairs, and place a potential enemy of vast strength in a most favourable position to attack Japan should trouble ever arise. Above all, it would hem in Korea entirely on the land side, and



inevitably lead to its ultimate annexation, if Russian methods of the past three centuries were any guide. Korea, standing as it did between Port Arthur and Vladivostok, would constitute an undesirable intervening obstruction to the freedom of Russian operations at sea unless under Russian control, and no Tsar would rest content till it was added to his dominions. In short, a Russian Manchuria with its southern sea extremity at Port Arthur, and its southern land border directly in contact with Korea along an undefended and easily traversable frontier, would introduce a more serious and imminent danger to Japan than anything since the days of Kublai Khan. The Japanese were resolved, therefore, to forgo no effort to prevent it, and as the Russians were obstinately resolved to proceed with this scheme, a deadlock was reached towards the end of 1903, after much diplomatic controversy, by which time the Russians had already been established for more than two years in the disputed region, and done much to consolidate their hold. In their endeavours to settle the matter peaceably by compromise, the Japanese went so far as to propose a convention whereby they would pledge themselves to recognize Manchuria as being outside their legitimate sphere of influence, if the Russians would meet them half-way by agreeing to recognize that Korea was outside that of Russia. Five successive revisions of the original draft of this proposal were made in St. Petersburg to gain time while more of the Tsar's ships were being despatched eastward, and in the final form in which alone the Russian Foreign Office declared it would be acceptable Japan was to have no word in Manchurian affairs, but Russia was to be subject to no pledges or restrictions as regards Korea. It was essentially a dispute of the kind best settled by arbitration, but at that period the idea of arbitration in international affairs was in its infancy. Moreover, it is very doubtful if the Russians would ever have agreed to abide by the verdict of an impartial tribunal, for their case had no foundation in equity; and they were convinced, like many other

people, that Japan would never dare to go to war. In this they were profoundly mistaken. The Japanese had no intention of accepting an arrangement whereby they renounced much without gaining anything in return, and as the last word had apparently been said on the Russian side, a situation arose which nothing but war could end, should neither nation be afraid to face the ordeal.

The position of affairs did, indeed, suggest that Japan would be taking the gravest of risks in resorting to hostilities. In her struggle with China all the strategic advantages had lain with her opponent, and although these had been successfully overcome, the same advantages in an emphasized form would again lie with the enemy—except on one point—in a conflict with Russia. If Japan was defeated on the sea, not only would it put an end to all hope of forcing the Russians to quit Manchuria, but it would lay Japan herself open to the tremendous danger of a Russian invasion on a scale which made the attempt of Kublai Khan appear trivial. With Port Arthur, Talien-wan, and Vladivostok all available as embarkation ports, and all in railway connection with the mobilizing centres of the Russian Empire, the number of troops suitable for an invasion of Japan was only limited by the number required for peace-time duties elsewhere; and assuming that a general mobilization had been ordered, an invading force might have been organized at least twice as numerous as any Japanese army which could be raised and equipped for the defence of the homeland. No insuperable difficulties in regard to sea transport of the kind that had made the conquest of Japan impossible to the Mongols were any longer a bar to the movement of an invading host, and as long as Russia was not actively assisted by any ally, neither Great Britain nor any other Power was bound to help Japan.

For Russia—as for China eight years before—defeat on the sea by Japan would not of itself spell final disaster. The prime Russian object was to resist expulsion from

Manchuria and Port Arthur. An army independent of sea communications could hold on to both, in spite of anything which a hostile fleet might attempt, and such an army was in actual possession. Consequently it would be necessary for Japan to follow up any success on the water by undertaking war on a large scale on shore. And Russia enjoyed the further advantage that her capital was out of reach of any operations practicable to the Japanese arms on either element. The distance of St. Petersburg from the region in dispute was not an unmixed advantage, but it did at least produce a situation in which by going to war Russia would risk no more than an outlying extremity of her dominions, whereas the Japanese would risk the very heart of their Empire. Thus, not only would the latter be venturing their all by war, but success on both elements would be necessary for the achievement of their special object of forcing the Russians out of Manchuria. The Russians, on the other hand, would be risking nothing absolutely vital, while success on either element—it did not much matter which—would enable them to remain rooted in Chinese territory. But, as already observed, there was one point of great importance in Japan's favour. The Japanese producing centres for war-supplies lay within close and easy reach by sea of the prospective theatre of operations, whereas the Russian were very far distant by a slow land route quite useless for the transport of heavy articles such as naval guns of 50 tons weight. The Russian bases at Port Arthur and Vladivostok were merely dumping depots, and not manufacturing arsenals except in a very small way. The Japanese bases, on the other hand, were at, or immediately adjacent to, the spots where munitions and articles of maritime equipment of all kinds were actually turned out. A Japanese shell might be fired at the enemy within a week of the moment when it left the workshop, or a damaged gun replaced in the same time. A Russian shell could not be used for months, and a really heavy gun could not be replaced at all. The same applied to

the *personnel*. A Japanese recruit for either service despatched with his draft of comrades to reinforce the fighters on either element might be playing his part in the conflict within two or three days of marching on board ship. For the Russian recruit ordered to the war area a tedious and exhausting journey of many weeks was the inevitable prelude. In any contest waged near a coastline in which one side feeds the war by a sea route and the other by land over a long distance, the advantage under modern conditions of sea transport must lie with the former, as the Franco-British expedition to the Crimea had demonstrated very clearly, and the Japanese authorities were doubtless fully alive to this and based great hopes on Russian difficulties of supply, especially to their fleet. When the war was actually in progress, this proximity to the theatre of maritime operations saved Japan from downfall at one of the most critical moments of its whole course, and, although the point does not appear to have been remarked in any history of the struggle so far produced, it does seem quite possible that in a shortage of ammunition may be found the explanation of the otherwise unaccountable inactivity of the Russian fleet at a certain vital stage.

Apart from the situation created by geographical conditions, the prospects of this particular war were unique and remarkable in several points. As already observed, all chance of success depended for the Japanese in the first place on victory at sea, and yet they knew that they had none of the means of making good losses to their fleet such as their opponents would enjoy. At that period the Japanese dockyards had not been sufficiently developed to build even one "capital ship," and every vessel of modern design in their navy, large or small, had been launched from a foreign slipway. When once hostilities were started, no more could be obtained from abroad, and every vessel lost represented a permanent weakening of their position at sea. The same state of affairs had prevailed in their war with China, but then the enemy had suffered under a like difficulty.

In a conflict with Russia it would be otherwise, for the Russian dockyards in Europe could build their own ships, and although considerable difficulties would attend the despatch of any vessels from the Neva yards to the Far East in the status of belligerents, these difficulties were not insuperable, as events were to prove. As a consequence the Japanese admirals were faced with the anticipation of entering upon a mighty struggle under a handicap such as no sea commanders had ever carried in any important war in history. And as hostilities ran their course in the periods which followed, the unique spectacle was presented to the world of a victorious navy growing steadily smaller from the outset, while the losing navy as steadily expanded till the finally decisive meeting.

The Russian maritime position also had its interesting peculiarities. Owing to the permanent closure of the Dardanelles to ships of war, the Russian Black Sea fleet counted for nothing in any war with a Power outside. It constituted a burden on Russian finances giving but a poor return, for although a battleship in the Black Sea cost just as much as a battleship in the Baltic, her general value was much less to national defence. But that was nothing new. The novel feature of the war with Japan arose from the fact that the distance from the scene of conflict made it difficult for the combatant with the larger navy to act in full strength. This was the direct result of the scientific progress which converted ships from sailers to steamers, for whereas vessels under sail could make the passage to the Far East without calling at any intermediate port, and often did, steamers had to break their voyages at several points to obtain fuel. In war such calls are not properly permissible at neutral ports, although the degree to which this principle of international custom is carried varies in different countries. Russia possessed no port whatever of her own between the Baltic and the Yellow Sea, and could not possibly send ships of war to the East during a period of war unless by the connivance of some ostensible neutral

or neutrals whose neutrality was not above suspicion. Japan reposed some confidence at first in the protection which this seemed to afford, but it proved to be misplaced in the end. The route to the Far East round the Cape of Good Hope passed near certain harbours under the Portuguese and French flags, and whereas Portugal was not strong enough to enforce the obligations of neutrality where Russia was concerned, France was only too anxious to help Russia by every means short of measures which would bring Great Britain into the war as an ally of Japan.

For some years before the diplomatic *impasse* reached in 1904, both countries had been making great efforts to increase their fleets. The Japanese devoted a large part of the indemnity received from China after the previous war to placing shipbuilding contracts in Europe and the United States, with the result that six fine battleships were in commission under the Japanese flag. Individually four of these were better than any Russian battleship in Pacific waters, while the remaining pair were quite up to the Russian average. In addition to this half-dozen their battle-squadron included the *Chen-yuen* taken from China nine years before, but by this time too old and slow for a place in the line with the new vessels. The six new battleships formed the main strength of the Japanese Fleet, the foundation upon which alone the command of the sea could be established, and as such the foundation upon which all the Japanese plans depended, and with them the whole future of Japanese history. Their value to Japan was beyond calculation, and when it is borne in mind that they were irreplaceable if lost, some idea may be formed of the anxiety with which the Japanese authorities watched their fate from day to day for the two years of the war.

Next to the battleships in importance came eight armoured cruisers, forming a homogeneous squadron and a useful supplement to the former in the general actions. Two of these, purchased in Europe at the very last moment before the war, were afterwards included

in the battle squadron itself in place of lost vessels. As a type the armoured cruiser was much in vogue at that time, although she disappeared when the battle cruiser was introduced. Costing as much as battleships, this class of vessel did not represent the same offensive value because armament was sacrificed to engine power, and their general design was a compromise embodying no very definite tactical ideas. But when once adopted in certain navies, the others were more or less compelled to follow suit or be prepared for the difficulty of dealing with an enemy fast enough to elude battleships and too powerful to be engaged by light cruisers. The Japanese accordingly followed the general fashion when they invested a portion of their naval expenditure in armoured cruisers, but situations arose during the war in which they must have regretted that some of the money thus laid out had not been devoted to battleship construction instead.

In light cruisers and all the craft of smaller tonnage such as sloops, torpedo-gunboats, etc., which assist and co-operate in light-cruiser duties, the Japanese were somewhat better off than the Russians, and could count on a total of about twenty-one pennants in these classes exclusive of quite obsolete vessels. But not until very near the end did the conflict afford much scope for light-cruiser activity. During the earlier phases it was not a war of movement in the actual region of maritime operations, and until the last stage was reached, little scouting for an enemy at sea was required. The watch on the hostile bases was chiefly maintained by destroyers. No commercial blockade formed any feature in the situation, nor was there any Russian sea trade inviting attack. And the defence of such of the Japanese trade as was threatened lay more with the armoured cruisers than the light cruisers, because the menace came from the Russian armoured-cruiser squadron at Vladivostok. For a long time, therefore, the Japanese derived but little benefit from their superiority to the enemy in unarmoured vessels.

Their torpedo craft force was composed of seventeen destroyers backed by as many sea-going torpedo-boats. Herein they had a useful preponderance over the enemy, in a branch for which the war provided constant work, for although the attacks actually delivered by the Japanese flotillas against the Russian main forces were few owing to lack of opportunity, their services were in perpetual demand for keeping a close watch on the enemy's base and in the skirmishes with hostile flotillas, mine-layers, mine-sweepers, and other small craft which frequently occurred in the offing and approaches to Port Arthur. Their constant presence in that vicinity probably accounted for the fact that the sole attempt on the part of the Russian battle squadron to break out took place by day instead of by night.

Of the four separate types of fighting ships, therefore, which at that period were regarded as the essential constituents of any completely organized fleet, the Japanese Navy possessed six battleships, eight armoured cruisers, twenty-one vessels of the light armoured classes, and thirty-four torpedo craft. All these were of fairly modern design.

In addition to the above, a heterogeneous remnant of obsolete vessels were available, useless for the main operations of war, but still seaworthy and fit for service in a number of auxiliary or subsidiary duties. Some of these were detailed for harbour defence, some for mine-laying; others for coast reconnaissance and the support of troops in action near the shore; others, again, for convoy attendance on transports.

Although Japan had no shipbuilding plant, the whole Japanese Navy operated under the advantage of excellent repairing bases near at hand, ensuring that the very most should be made of every vessel under the flag; and while no vessel actually sunk could be replaced, those suffering from damage in action or the ordinary wear and tear of war were restored to a serviceable condition with a minimum of delay. The supplies of ammunition were also ample, spare guns were ready at the shortest



notice, and adequate quantities of the best Welsh coal reached their depots in spite of every effort of the Russians to intercept the colliers.

In fitness for war as distinguished from numbers, the Japanese Navy was probably second to none in the world. The experience and success gained in the conflict with China had raised the spirit of the *personnel* even higher than it was before. All ranks and ratings were conscious of belonging to a branch of the national service regarded with pride by every man and woman in Japan, and all made it a point of honour to justify the confidence they inspired. Training and administration were continually worked up to higher levels of efficiency, and through constant effort and strenuous practice every ship, large or small, endeavoured to reach the perfection of the fighting machine which her type was supposed to represent. All this, however, would have availed little if those responsible for the superior control had failed to appreciate the proper methods of using the fine instrument placed under their direction. But here, again, the Japanese displayed a high level of capacity. From first to last the conduct of operations, as planned at headquarters to meet the varying situations arising from day to day throughout the conflict, was characterized by sound judgment and accurate foresight.

The chief command afloat was vested in Admiral Togo, who abundantly proved his fitness for this great responsibility, and earned the right to a place among the foremost figures in the history of war. It was once said of the British Navy at Trafalgar that "St. Vincent had forged a matchless weapon, which by the sagacity of Barham was wielded at the right time and place by a master hand." Something to the same effect might be repeated of the Japanese fleet that sailed on a February morning to meet the enemy after an all-night council of war in Togo's cabin. To the ordinary reader the distinguished Japanese admiral is usually remembered only as the victor of Tsushima. That in itself would doubtless constitute a lasting claim to renown, but Togo did much

more than win one great battle. Tsushima was merely the consummation of a long period of such strain and labour as few men could have endured. From the very outset he was confronted by a problem the like of which no other admiral in history has ever been called upon to face. The imperative interests of Japan required that he should undertake and maintain the offensive against a navy nearly double in numbers to that of his own country, without any reserves at his disposal from first to last. Such a problem could only be solved by defeating the enemy in detail, and this he did, but a single important reverse at any stage of the process would have ruined the whole. The final triumph was preceded by many months of constant anxiety, strenuous effort, and unvarying vigilance, in which long periods of watchful endeavour were only broken by calls for prompt decision and immediate action. Day after day the Japanese supremacy at sea had to be upheld at all costs, and no prescience could foretell from day to day what danger might threaten it next. Disasters had to be accepted with resolute fortitude and successes followed up by every endeavour to make them complete. All this Togo accomplished. When the curtain rung up on the final act of this stirring and majestic drama he made a signal reminding his officers and men that the fate of Japan depended on their efforts that day. The fluttering flags at the masthead of the *Mikasa* expressed a profound truth; but Togo might have hoisted the same signal with equal justification on every morning of the sixteen months that had passed since the firing of the first shot, and on no man wearing the Emperor's uniform had the fate of Japan depended more than upon himself. No better summary of his character could perhaps be penned than that given in the British official history of the war, in which, when referring to his dispositions before his last great battle, we are told that—

“while his conduct of the whole campaign claims admiration and the completeness of his final triumph compels something akin to wonder, it is easy to underrate the less

obtrusive side of his action—the strategical insight, the determination and the restraint which gave him strength to wait.”

Turning now to the forces which Togo had to overthrow or hold back all through the war if Japanese intentions in Manchuria and Korea were to have any prospect of success, it is noteworthy in the first place that as regards battleships proper—which at that period certainly formed the backbone of any fleet—the enemy were numerically much superior. Seven lay at Port Arthur, while an eighth was well on her way out, and four more were on the Baltic in various stages of construction. These figures refer only to vessels of thoroughly modern design. In addition four battleships of older but still serviceable types were in the home ports. For the period immediately antecedent to the outbreak of war, however, only the seven in the Far East counted, but even these gave the Russians a slight preponderance on the spot of this most important class of vessel.

In armoured cruisers they were not so well off. In their allocation of naval expenditure they had followed the policy of devoting a larger proportion of the total outlay towards building the more formidable type of vessel than did the Japanese, and herein for once in a way their administration had displayed the better judgment. As a result their battleships exceeded those of their enemy, but in the secondary matter of armoured cruisers they were relatively weak. Only four of these vessels were serving in Eastern waters, with two more in Europe.

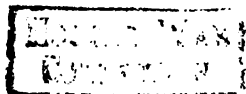
Of the light armoured classes the Russians counted eight vessels of modern type in the East, besides eight of obsolete construction, fit only for subsidiary duties such as local defence. Five more were in Europe of good design for the general requirements of war. As already remarked, however, the absence of any of the scouting duties necessary for a fleet cruising at sea, or of commercial blockade, or the attack or defence of trade, resulted in a comparatively small demand for the light-cruiser type of ship. Russian inferiority in that respect

was not in consequence a serious handicap to their efforts, especially as they left all initiative to the Japanese.

The Russian fleet on the station included also twenty-five destroyers and ten torpedo-boats fit for general sea-going work. Nearly all of these were new vessels, representing a formidable force on paper, but they were rarely used with enterprise, and scarcely ever prevented the Japanese torpedo craft from approaching Port Arthur. Nor did they ever seriously threaten either the battle squadron or the transports of their enemy.

The total Russian force in the East therefore comprised seven battleships, four armoured cruisers, eight vessels of the light armoured classes, and thirty-five sea-going torpedo craft, counting vessels of modern design only. In addition to these were included about a dozen obsolete ships of small and varying type, but fit for sea. In Europe was assembled another fleet of all the four principal classes nearly equal in strength to that which the Japanese were called upon to face at the outbreak of war. This gave the Russians a reserve almost as complete and formidable as their original fighting line, whereas their enemies had no reserve whatever.

But in efficiency for war the Russians were far inferior to the Japanese. Russian naval history has its fine pages, but after their misuse of the Black Sea fleet by sinking it in 1854, the Russians seem to have lost a proper appreciation of what a fleet is expected to do; and when, after forty years of indifference to maritime affairs, they realized that a strong position in the Pacific must be a matter of great importance to their future, their revived naval activity was not inspired by a right understanding. To the St. Petersburg authorities a fleet was merely an assembly of armed ships with men on board to work the guns and engines. They built or bought the ships accordingly, and they provided the men, of whom a half at least were farm hands from inland districts. A certain system of order and discipline was also established, but it was the discipline of the barrack square rather than the sea, with plenty of parade



and gun-drill, but all in the form of harbour exercises. The ships lay for months at their moorings till the weeds grew long on their bottoms and the engines deteriorated. This was bad for the men and the ships, but it was worst of all for the officers, who rarely obtained any practice in squadron manœuvring, and seem to have made little effort to get it. With the harbour authorities at the various coaling-stations and ports of call on the route to the East, such as Malta and Port Said, the clumsy handling of Russian ships was almost proverbial at that time; nor was it to be wondered at, for a large proportion of the senior ranks of the Russian Navy had spent the greater part of their lives in civil employment of all sorts on shore, and lost touch of any kind with the sea. This low level of professional capacity extended to the supreme control. With the notable exception of Admiral Makaroff, the officers in high authority displayed lack of enterprise and faulty judgment from first to last. When the war broke out Vice-Admiral Stark held the command afloat, but subject to the instructions and orders of Admiral Alexeieff, the Russian Viceroy on shore. Alexeieff was responsible for the main dispositions and strategy, but having been long dissociated from the sea, made some serious mistakes, especially at the outset.

In the autumn of 1903 the regular question of the winter stations and distribution of the Russian fleet required the usual attention. Neither Port Arthur nor the neighbouring anchorage in Talien-wan Bay is much troubled with ice, but Vladivostok is frozen over from November to March, rendering exit possible only by the slow and laborious work of ice-breakers, which requires several days to get a fleet out. Port Arthur is somewhat cramped for space, however, and Alexeieff did not consider it convenient to station the three largest and longest of the armoured cruisers there as well as the battle squadron during the winter months. He might have berthed them in Talien-wan Bay had he chosen, but for some reason selected Vladivostok instead, where, accordingly, they were sent. Thus, instead of keeping his

armoured ships together at a time when the diplomatic situation was growing steadily worse, he separated them widely beyond reach of mutual support. Apparently he could not believe that the Japanese would fight, but failed to bear in mind that the greater the risks he placed before them, the more likely it would be that his opinion would prove correct. In view of the great importance of concentration for the first encounter in war, and of the suitability of Talien-wan for his requirements, this dispersion of his main force at a period when grave emergencies were at least possible did not enhance his reputation for foresight as a strategist. Had these three vessels been present with Stark's battle squadron when war broke out it would have raised the force at his immediate disposal to eleven armoured ships carrying amongst them an armament as heavy in the aggregate—or nearly so—as the twelve present under Togo in the first action of the war.

Nor was it only in the general areas of distribution that the Russian arrangements were at fault. The actual position of the battle squadron with its attendant cruisers at the beginning of February, when the diplomatic controversy about Manchuria had reached an acute stage, was such as to expose it to risks without sufficiently good reason. Instead of remaining inside Port Arthur to await possible developments, where it would have been quite inaccessible to Togo, the squadron was sent out to anchor in the open roadstead opposite to the entrance. Possibly Alexeieff meant to be ready for emergency, and was desirous of avoiding the delay involved in getting the whole force of large and indifferently handled ships out of the narrow entrance should an immediate call for their services arise. But if in reality sufficiently alive to the possibilities of the situation to take such a step, he should have avoided half-measures and sent the squadron right to sea, to remain under way out of sight to the westward or northward. Such a move would have made it more difficult for the Japanese to find them should the latter

attempt a surprise attack. By depriving them of the absolute security of the inner harbour without giving them the comparative security of an unknown position he took a middle course which promised trouble. Even when lying exposed in the outer roads the Russians disregarded the full precautions proper to a critical period, for although the ships had steam at short notice, no orders for darkening at night were issued, no torpedo-nets were out, no searchlights were in use except in one vessel detailed in turn, and beyond a nightly reconnaissance to seaward by a pair of destroyers no patrolling arrangements were in force. Such incomplete and half-hearted methods were characteristic of the Russian naval organization of the period in most of its branches.

This was the general situation when war became inevitable. The Japanese had been extremely anxious to keep the peace, and stretched their readiness to compromise to its farthest limits, but when hostilities could no longer be averted they struck at once and struck hard. On February 6, 1904, their Minister in St. Petersburg was instructed to break off diplomatic negotiations and announce his immediate recall. On the same day Togo received orders to proceed to attack the Russian fleet. Information of its exposed position had reached the Japanese, who meant to profit thereby if possible, although it may be doubted whether they expected to find them still outside after the recall of the Japanese Minister. Togo proposed to deliver a night attack with his destroyers on any vessels in the roadstead and follow this up by an attack with his whole fleet at daybreak; if this proved to be possible without unduly exposing his ships to the fire from the batteries on shore. He arrived within striking distance in the evening of the 8th, but kept out of sight till midnight, then sent the destroyers ahead to strike their blow and steamed in somewhat later with his main body, so as to be within sight of the enemy at sunrise. Fortune favoured the Japanese plan so far that the Russians were still lying outside, where three were struck by the Japanese

torpedoes, including the *Tsarevitch* and *Retvizan*, the two best battleships in their fleet, the third victim being a light cruiser. But none of the three were actually sunk. The Russian return fire was very ineffective, in part at least because they were taken unprepared; and the attacking flotilla escaped unscathed. But the attack by the main Japanese fleet which took place as intended in the morning was carried out at so long a range to avoid the fire of the guns on shore that very trifling damage was effected to the ships of either side, and the casualties to the crews only amounted to some fifty or sixty in each fleet. Finding that he could effect little unless at great risk to his ships from the batteries, and that the enemy would not leave the protection they afforded, Togo withdrew in the course of the morning. One fine incident took place during the engagement. The small Russian torpedo-cruiser *Novik*, commanded by the most brilliantly enterprising officer in the Russian Navy, Essen by name, ran out alone at full speed and endeavoured to torpedo a Japanese battleship at close range, but was so severely knocked about by their fire that she only escaped destruction with difficulty. In the course of the day the three disabled Russian ships were brought to the harbour entrance, and two taken right in, but the *Retvizan* grounded at the mouth of the Channel and remained there for a month in spite of every effort to float her. On the day after the whole fleet re-entered. Thus the Japanese plan had not succeeded in inflicting an overwhelming disaster on the enemy as they had not unreasonably hoped. But their destroyers had reduced the fighting strength of the Russians by two battleships and a light cruiser for the time at least—an initial success of some consequence; and apart from this temporary weakening of their opponents, the events of these first twelve hours of the war had furnished the Japanese with an invaluable bit of information; for the refusal of the Russians to quit the support of their shore defences made it evident that they had no intention of assuming the offensive at sea.



The Russian Government protested with great vehemence in a publicly issued note against the Japanese action in attacking without a formal declaration of war, but no well-established basis existed for such a complaint, either in historical precedent or in any accepted and binding agreement among nations, such, for example, as the Geneva Convention. A formal declaration of war was quite unnecessary in the existing state of international law at the time, and history abounded in instances in which it had been omitted, including cases where the Russians themselves were involved. Except in the few countries which had strong ties with Russia, therefore, this protest evoked little sympathy. Rather was the Russian Government regarded as having brought the trouble on its own head by insisting on the maintenance of an attitude with regard to Manchuria and Korea which made war inevitable, without taking the ordinary precautions to meet the consequences; and their protest did not tend to raise them in foreign estimation.

On the same day that Togo attacked off Port Arthur a subsidiary affair took place at Chemulpo. Here the Russians had stationed a light cruiser and a gunboat to attend on their Minister at Seoul. As the Japanese had made it clear from the outset that they could not reasonably be expected to forgo their right to protect their interests in Korea, they despatched a small party of troops under escort of some light cruisers to Chemulpo with orders to land and occupy Seoul. Finding the two Russians there, the Japanese admiral attacked, and after a very gallant defence the Russians destroyed their own ships.

These first engagements were immediately followed by a period of strenuous preparation of the armies on both sides. The Russians had no definite plans at the outset, but realized that the Japanese meant to take the initiative and force the situation to develop with the least delay possible. The latter, on the other hand, had begun their mobilization ashore and afloat immediately on the rupture of diplomatic relations, with their plan of

campaign—or at least their general line of policy—fully mapped out. The hope had been cherished that the greater portion of the enemy's naval forces might be put out of action in one way or another in the opening engagement of the war, and the sea thereby rendered safe for the despatch of an army to Korea. But that hope had not been fulfilled, and they were now faced with the necessity of arriving at a decision in a matter of grave importance, on which would depend the whole subsequent course of the war. Were they or were they not to take the risk of sending a large expeditionary force across the water in the undecided condition of the maritime situation? Rumour has it that the balance of naval opinion regarded such a step with serious apprehension, and declined to guarantee either the safe transport of the troops or the security of their supplies. The Russian fleet had, indeed, indicated by its proceedings on the 8th and 9th that it was not intending for the moment to act on the offensive, but orders to the contrary might come at any time from higher authority, and it remained a danger not to be lightly regarded in the same manner as the Chinese Fleet in similar circumstances ten years before. But the military authorities urged that the best, and perhaps the only chance of driving the enemy out of Manchuria lay in rapid action, trusting to gain important advantages in the early stages by the difficulty and delay which the Russians must experience in sending reinforcements over the solitary railway which formed their long line of communications. This consideration prevailed, and the bold resolution was formed of proceeding with the least possible delay in the despatch of an army of some 60,000 men to Korea, with the object, firstly, of forestalling any possible occupation of that country by the Russians, and secondly, of advancing thence into Manchuria on a campaign of invasion. The decision was productive of eminently successful results in the end, but occasions arose during the course of the war in which the Japanese only escaped by the narrowest of margins from paying an appalling penalty for dis-

regarding a principle in oversea warfare which history had more than once emphasized with uncompromising distinctness.

Having this decision before them, the naval authorities were bound to accept it whether they approved of it or not, and do their utmost to ensure its success. Being doubtful of their power to destroy the enemy's fleet, they resorted to a policy for rendering it ineffective. The matters at stake were too vital to take any chances, and the results of a general engagement too uncertain to justify any attempt to entice the enemy to a fleet action at sea, such as might occur if he was tempted to attack the Japanese troopship convoys. The object, therefore, upon which they concentrated their attention was the *blocking* rather than the *watching* of the Russian ships. To effect this purpose arrangements were taken in hand for closing up the entrance of Port Arthur by sunken vessels—a very difficult project but strategically sound in conception under the somewhat special circumstances of the case. The period during which this policy remained in force marked a distinct phase in the war, although not of long duration. Its supposed success at one stage, and its ascertained failure somewhat later, both produced an immediate and far-reaching effect on the Japanese plans of the moment. At the same time, they had to take into consideration the risk to troop movements by sea arising from the presence of the three Russian armoured cruisers at Vladivostok, of which the freedom would not be effected by any closing of Port Arthur. These vessels, all very fast steamers, had already managed to get to sea by the end of February with the assistance of an ice-breaker, and appeared off the north coast of Japan and the east coast of Korea. A part of the Japanese armoured-cruiser squadron had therefore to be detached from the main fleet under Rear-Admiral Kamimura to deal with them. Owing to thick fogs the opposing forces missed each other at sea, and the Russians returned to Vladivostok in ignorance of how nearly they had escaped being brought to action. But when the

weather cleared Kamimura cruised off the port and fired some shots into it at long range. These had no material effect, but the knowledge that the Japanese cruisers were in the neighbourhood prevented the Russians from making any more sorties for a considerable period, and thereby gained the immediate object of ensuring the immunity of the troopship fleets from their attention.

So expeditiously was the work of embarking the army for Korea carried out, that by the middle of February the first transports were despatched and arrived unmolested on the 17th at Chemulpo, selected as the first point for landing, although at a later stage abandoned for the Taidong River farther towards the frontier. From that date troops poured steadily into Korea by thousands, and the stream of crowded transports hastening to their destination and back was incessant, but no interference came from the enemy. By the 24th the first blocking expedition for Port Arthur was ready. Five cargo steamers laden with coal-dust and heavy refuse, and each fitted with self-sinking explosive arrangements, were despatched after dark to make for the entrance, where their crews were to blow them up and trust to escape as best they could to an accompanying flotilla of torpedo-boats. The night was stormy, and the officers in command were so blinded by the glare of the numerous searchlights, and the flashes of the guns and bursting shells when the batteries discovered them and opened a rapid fire, that accurate navigation became impossible, and each touched off his explosive charges at a wrong moment in the belief that he had arrived at the mouth of the entrance. The attempt was a failure in consequence, although made with great gallantry. For a time the Japanese were ignorant of this, but their hopes were dashed within a very few days by the emergence of some of the larger Russian ships. These did not go beyond the covering range of the fortress guns, the support of which they had no immediate intention of leaving, but their appearance proved that the entrance was free from obstruction, and it suggested,

moreover, that a new spirit was animating the councils of the defence.

This new spirit was due to the arrival of Admiral Makaroff—the ablest officer on the Flag List of the Russian Navy—early in March to take over the command afloat. Makaroff was a fine seaman, and a resolute and enterprising leader, with energetic and clear-headed methods of administration. Realizing that the fleet placed under his orders was inferior to that of the enemy in every respect except in number of battleships, he threw all the weight of his powerful and attractive personality into raising its tone and efficiency as a first step towards its further use. For the only time in his distinguished career Togo was now confronted by an opponent whose qualifications for high command were equal to his own. At that early period in the war the Japanese Fleet was using a harbour on the Korean coast to the northward of Chemulpo as its advanced base and war anchorage, whence it maintained a watch on Port Arthur by cruisers and destroyers, but Makaroff's activity compelled Togo to keep his battleships more at sea. It became a frequent habit with the Russians to come out and practise manœuvres, and when the main Japanese fleet was not in sight these movements were often extended a considerable distance to seaward, although in full view of the Japanese lookout vessels. The Japanese, however, had by no means abandoned their hope of obstructing the harbour entrance as yet, and during this period were hastily preparing five more steamers as blockships. But while waiting for these vessels to be ready Togo continued his efforts to reduce the enemy's strength by any means which did not involve too great a hazard to his own ships. Attacks on the enemy while under cover of the powerful batteries on the coast were too risky to be advisable, but he did his best to sink or damage their battleships while at their moorings inside, by conducting long-range bombardments over the intervening land, from positions round the point forming the south-western extremity of the

peninsula, on which no gun of the shore defences would bear. These attacks must in time have produced their effect if persisted in, for the Japanese shells fell constantly close to the Russian ships, but by remarkable good fortune the latter escaped actual hits, and their invariable appearance outside the harbour soon after each bombardment led the Japanese to conclude that they were only wasting highly valuable ammunition. They were discontinued in consequence.

On March 27 everything was ready for the next attempt to close the entrance—that is to say, just a little more than a month after the first. On that night the five steamers to be sunk were despatched on their last voyage, accompanied as on the previous occasion by a rescuing division of torpedo-boats. But in the interval since the first attempt Makaroff had taken steps to frustrate any such intentions by laying mines, booms, and sunken obstacles in the approaches, through which only one passage existed. These obstructions answered their purpose, although so determined were the attackers that their efforts came within an ace of success in spite of every difficulty, and three of the five were sunk so near the mouth that one more would have completed an impassable barrier. In this case, as in the first, most of their heroic crews succeeded in escaping to the rescue flotilla. Once again, however, the sight of Russian battleships emerging from the harbour next day intimated to the Japanese that their sacrifices had been in vain. By this time, thanks in the main to Makaroff's energetic measures, the *Tsarevitch* and *Retvizan* had been repaired and were ready for service. The Russians therefore counted seven battleships to the Japanese six as before the war.

The situation was now growing more serious for Japan every day. Their position on the sea was no better than before the first shots had been fired. The Russians had lost some small vessels and destroyers on their own mines or by accidents, but against this was the steadily increasing efficiency of their main fleet under the strong

and capable hand of Makaroff, and when satisfied as to its fitness for the encounter, it might be anticipated with some certainty that such a commander would not be content to remain inactive at Port Arthur. On the land the Japanese were committed to operations on a large scale, already launched and well on the move, but of which the success was always dependent on the enemy's fleet being held back from the line of communications—a task straining Togo's resources to the utmost. Then came the gravest news of all, for during this period the Japanese Intelligence Service in Europe reported that with the break-up of the ice on the Neva strenuous work had commenced for the despatch of Russian naval reinforcements on a scale almost equal to the whole fleet of the Tsar already in the East. The Japanese knew that these reinforcements could only make the voyage out under great difficulties and with the connivance of so-called neutrals, but the feat was not impossible, and the attitude of certain ostensibly neutral States was of the kind which only hesitated to assist their enemy from fear of the intervention of Great Britain. With sound judgment, therefore, they decided that the arrival of a large Russian fleet from Europe must not only be regarded as a possible eventuality, but should be the dominating consideration upon which all their plans afloat and ashore must be based. Togo was urged to do his utmost to deal with the fleet already on the station, and preparations were pressed forward for a third blocking enterprise on a much larger scale than either of the others, in which no fewer than twelve steamers were to be sacrificed. And as before, while waiting for these to be completed, the Japanese Fleet was busy with other methods.

Watching cruisers had observed that the Russians usually appeared to follow certain courses in passing through the outer roadstead and its vicinity on their manœuvring excursions from Port Arthur, and from this the Japanese inferred that they were avoiding their own minefields. Togo resolved to make use of this knowledge if he could. A scheme was accordingly prepared whereby

destroyers were to lay mines by night in the areas through which the heavy Russian ships were accustomed to steer. When this had been done the latter were to be enticed out, if possible, by bringing on an action which a Japanese torpedo-craft flotilla could set in motion by carrying out a daylight reconnaissance. It had become the practice of the Russians to send out destroyers supported by one or two light cruisers, whenever the enemy's flotillas were sighted near the harbour, to chase them off. By supporting their own destroyers with cruisers in this way the Japanese hoped to induce or compel the enemy to send out battleships. The mines were laid accordingly and the stratagem worked very well, although it transpired afterwards that it was only by an accident that the trap was not discovered, for a Russian destroyer on the watch had observed the Japanese mine-layers moving about in the dark and reported that their activities appeared suspicious. This report failed for some reason, however, to reach the Russian Admiral in time, who was outwitted at last and paid the penalty with his own life. The bait of a Japanese flotilla in sight by broad daylight next morning, with light cruisers in company, brought him out in his own flagship with other battleships. A skirmish took place, followed by a chase as the Japanese destroyers retreated in accordance with their orders, and then the Japanese battle fleet appeared on the horizon. Not wishing to engage at that period, the Russians turned homeward, and in crossing the mined area the battleship *Petropavlosk* was blown up with nearly all hands, including the gallant Makaroff, while another, the *Pobieda*, also struck a mine and was disabled. This was the greatest success yet scored by the Japanese, but in its most important aspect it was mainly due to pure good fortune, for although the cleverness of the stratagem deserved the reward of sinking an enemy ship, it was quite a fortuitous circumstance that out of all those present it should be the very vessel which flew the flag of such a man as Makaroff. His loss to the Russians counted for more than a squadron of battle-



ships if subsequent events are regarded in their true proportions.

The destruction of the Russian flagship took place on April 14. Nothing of consequence occurred on the water for the remainder of that month, nor did the Russians go out again. But large numbers of troops were being embarked in Japan for a new destination—of which more hereafter—and by the beginning of May preparations had been completed for the third and most ambitious blocking project of all. On the night of the 3rd the twelve steamers started on what proved to be a very heroic but unsuccessful and most sanguinary enterprise. Before nearing their destination they were scattered by a gale, and the officer in command of the expedition decided that the weather was too unfavourable to proceed in the execution of his orders with any prospect of carrying them into effect. He endeavoured, therefore, to make a general recall, but his signals only reached three of his consorts. The remaining eight pressed on with their desperate task, and in the face of extraordinary difficulties of navigation pushed their advance to the uttermost point they could reach. But the obstacles in their track were now more formidable than ever, and the whole eight were sunk without reaching their goal. Indeed, they did not come so near to success by a long way as their five predecessors in the attempt made a few weeks earlier; nor was the fate of their devoted crews so fortunate, for hardly any survived. The violence of the wind and sea made it impossible to use their boats when the steamers went down, and they perished with them. A very few were picked up by the accompanying torpedo-boats, which ran great risks themselves in their efforts to rescue, and a few more succeeded in swimming ashore, but refusing to surrender fought to the last against the Russian soldiers and were all killed.

Seventeen steamers had now been sacrificed in this way at a time when the requirements of their army for transport services were making heavy and constantly increasing demands on the resources of the Japanese

mercantile marine. A decision had already been reached, therefore, that no more blocking enterprises would be possible, whether the third was successful or otherwise. Togo, indeed, was led to believe from the reports of his reconnoitring destroyers that his purpose had been accomplished at last, and telegraphed home accordingly. His announcement caused great relief in Japan, and some little time elapsed before the authorities were undeceived, for the Russians made no signs of showing themselves outside. In point of fact, their non-appearance was due to fears of a fate similar to that which had overtaken the *Petropavlosk*, and not to any actual barrier in the channel; but their inactivity tended to confirm the belief of their enemies that the harbour had been at length effectually sealed, and in that faith the Japanese proceeded with the execution of a new and most important enterprise. The first phase of the maritime war was in any case over, for no more ships could be spared to continue the policy of blocking, and the general situation seemed to be rather more free from anxiety for Japan than in the preceding month. It was something decidedly to their advantage that one enemy's battleship had been destroyed and another badly damaged, and the belief seemed to be well founded that the remainder were shut off from any power of working harm. Moreover, their operations on shore were progressing brilliantly, and on April 29 the Japanese had driven the Russian forces from their position on the Yalu River in the first land battle of the war. Above all, the one officer of rank in the Russian Navy whose qualities of leadership were a much more serious menace to Japan than the Russian superiority in battleships was now no more, and his place had been taken by Admiral Vitgeft, from whom as an adversary they had much less to fear. But the improvements in their prospects was only temporary, and days were near at hand in which they were fated to experience graver anxiety than ever.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SECOND PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME WAR

WHEN the third and final attempt was made to shut the Russian fleet into Port Arthur by closing the exit with sunken steamers the war had lasted three months all but a few days. It now entered on a second stage, not only from the naval but from the military standpoint; a stage in which the strategic employment of the two services was so closely associated and interdependent that no study of the special and separate duties of one can be complete without an understanding of the general rôle of the other. Wars between States which are separated by the sea may all be divided into three categories. In the first of these all the fighting has occurred on the water. Some of the most important struggles in British history have taken this form—as, for example, the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the Anglo-Dutch conflicts of the seventeenth century which gave Great Britain the carrying trade of the world. In the second category come the wars in which, although the sea divides the territories of the combatants all the fighting has nevertheless occurred on the land. That can naturally happen only when one or the other has no navy, or is too weak at sea to offer effective opposition to the enemy on that element. To this class the Crimean expedition of 1854 and the British campaigns in Asia and Africa during the nineteenth century all belong. The third category consists of the wars which have been fought out on both elements, as in the whole lengthy tale of Anglo-French hostilities from the Battle of Sluys in the reign of Edward III. to the Battle of Waterloo. In this third category the Russo-Japanese contest

occupies an unusually interesting and prominent place, because the definitely established maritime superiority, which was of such importance to both sides, remained for so long in doubt, that the plans of the land campaign were modified to meet the naval situation in a degree quite exceptional in history.

In the original plan for the Japanese operations in Manchuria it had been intended to place three armies on its southern and south-eastern borders, and so deploy them as to form one long line facing roughly to the north-west, which was to sweep forward and endeavour to envelop the Russian forces in a great battle to be fought somewhere near the important town of Liao-yang. The right wing of this line was to be formed by the army landed in Korea, which by the beginning of May was already in position after driving the Russians from their position on the Yalu on April 29, as observed at the close of the last chapter. The left wing was to consist of an army landed somewhere near the neck or northern part of the Liao-tung peninsula, and the centre of a third army landed on the Manchurian coast at the head of the Bay of Korea, roughly half-way between the other two. Many who are well qualified to judge have expressed the opinion that this plan of operations had excellent prospects of success, if executed quickly before the Russian force in Manchuria could receive support; and as far as organization and foresight are concerned, we have every reason to believe that the Japanese arrangements were such that the necessary rapidity of movement on the sea and land would have been attained if the plan had ever been carried out. It will be noticed that in this scheme for a general offensive Port Arthur was not included as an object of immediate attention. The Japanese had laid their plans in the hope that the Russian fleet would be decisively defeated at an early stage, or at least rendered incapable of threatening the Japanese movements. With Togo's ships in full control of the sea and their armies in control of Manchuria, Port Arthur would have been completely cut off. The fortress itself was

not a strategically important factor in the situation, except as the main base of the Russian fleet, and with no fleet to use it the necessity for its reduction would not have been so urgent as to justify any diversion of effort from the central operations, especially as its downfall would be assured sooner or later by the isolation thus brought about.

But the hope that their enemy's fleet would be destroyed or reduced to impotence early in the war had been disappointed; and moreover, as already observed, the Japanese authorities had received the disquieting information early in March that great preparations were in hand in the Baltic for the despatch of a fleet to the East, which in conjunction with the Russian vessels already at the theatre of war would prove an overwhelmingly superior force to any that Japan could oppose to it. Their only chance of dealing with this eventuality was to ensure that the Russian fleet on the spot should be destroyed or reduced to absolute powerlessness before the vessels due from Europe could arrive; and as this end could only be attained with certainty by seizing the stronghold wherein they obstinately remained out of reach, the capture of Port Arthur became an imperative necessity to which everything else had to give way. Just as in the conditions prevailing ten years before, however, when that fortress had been under the Chinese flag, it was still quite impossible for the Japanese Fleet to reduce it, unless with the prospect of such heavy losses in ships as to defeat the very object in view of establishing an undisputed command of the sea. Once again, therefore, it became necessary to apply an army to the task, and it was the force detailed in the original plan as the left wing of the Manchurian advance which was diverted to this new objective. This step was not taken without careful and mature deliberation, but it had its critics both at the time and since. Some authorities on land warfare have expressed the opinion that the Manchurian campaign should have been regarded as the central and dominating feature of the

situation to which other considerations should have been subordinated. But that argument is based on a narrow view. No amount of success in Manchuria would have availed in the end if the armies to which it was due finished up by finding themselves helplessly cut off from their own country by a hostile intervening fleet, and a situation might have arisen offering a parallel on a vastly more calamitous scale to the plight of the victorious Japanese troops in the Korean War of the sixteenth century after Yi-sun had swept the Japanese ships from the sea. Other critics, while admitting the necessity of attacking Port Arthur, have maintained that the Manchurian operations as originally planned gave promise of such early and reasonably certain results that Port Arthur might have been left till they were over. But time was of great importance, and the Japanese feared that the reduction of the fortress might prove to take longer than the outward voyage of the new hostile fleet. In any case it was very desirable that the war-worn Japanese ships should, if possible, get an interval for overhaul and refit before being called upon to face the formidable danger ahead. To any unbiased student of the whole circumstances, therefore, it seems evident that the Japanese decided wisely in postponing the prosecution of their original plans to deal with a situation presenting urgent and special demands.

The first movements on a large scale for the seizure of Port Arthur were therefore taken in hand very early in May. The army originally intended for the left wing of the Manchurian invasion had been embarked in seventy transports and despatched in April to the Taidong estuary on the coast of Korea, there to await orders as to its eventual point of landing. When Togo reported that he had reason to believe that the third blocking expedition had achieved its object this army was at once conveyed across the Bay of Korea to the south shore of the Liao-tung peninsula, where the first transports arrived on May 5 and the disembarkation began. The actual point selected for landing lay just opposite the

small group of the Elliot Islands, which are situated about eight miles from the mainland. The distance to Port Arthur by land was about sixty miles, and although the shallow water and muddy nature of the beach threw difficulties in the way of putting troops ashore, especially at low tide, the locality was no worse in that respect than any other stretch of that singularly unsuitable and unsheltered coast. From their experience of ten years earlier the Japanese were thoroughly acquainted with all its local features, and just as in the former expedition, so now, they only intended to use this exposed and unsatisfactory landing-place as a temporary and provisional point of disembarkation from which to advance and seize the fine harbour of Talien-wan Bay; which they determined to employ as their ultimate base where all troops and war material arriving later from Japan for the siege of Port Arthur would be put ashore. In relation to that operation it exactly corresponded to the function of Balaclava Harbour during the Siege of Sebastopol, although vastly better suited to the purpose. At the same time the anchorage within the circle of the Elliot Islands was adopted as the new advanced base of the Japanese Fleet, in place of their former coaling-station on the coast of Korea, and defended with mines, booms, and guns temporarily mounted at points covering the entrances. By this arrangement the fleet itself was always near at hand as a protection to the disembarkation, and yet not so far withdrawn from Port Arthur as to be too remote for effective action should the Russians venture out for a raid in some other direction. This comparative proximity to Port Arthur was not without the disadvantage that it increased the danger from attack on the transports by Russian torpedo craft, but as it was now the early summer the growing shortness of the nights reduced this risk continually. Such, indeed, was the reason adduced for not attacking by a council of Russian officers when Alexeieff and Vitgeft both suggested to the destroyer commanders that the attempt should be made, and as neither of these admirals would

take the responsibility of ordering it in the face of their representation nothing was done.

When the news was received in St. Petersburg that the landing of a Japanese army had begun on the Liao-tung peninsula with the evident intention of attacking Port Arthur it caused great concern at Russian headquarters. From the very first the Russian authorities had cherished the hope of defeating all the Japanese plans sooner or later by a decisive victory on the sea. Much larger reserves of troops were at their disposal than at their enemy's, but every increase in the size of the army in the field added to the difficulty of keeping it supplied over a long and solitary line of railway, and they feared that a point might be reached in which the strain on that slender connection might cause a breakdown. Success on the sea would end the war definitely in their favour, and their navy was also much larger in the aggregate than that of their adversary. Of the ships in the Baltic, a sufficient number were either ready for sea or nearing completion, to provide Vitgeft at a fairly early date with a reinforcement on such a scale as to give him a marked superiority in numbers over Togo; and in spite of the difficulties of the voyage, they were sanguine of getting them out before many months had elapsed. But if Port Arthur was taken the fleet inside it would be doomed, unless it could escape to Vladivostok, which seemed doubtful, and the vessels at home did not of themselves represent a strong enough force to wrest the maritime command from the Japanese. In such an event they would be compelled to wait till the other ships under construction on the Neva, but in backward stages of completion, were ready, before a fleet of sufficient strength for that purpose could be despatched, which must necessitate a postponement of the project for at least a year more. The loss of Port Arthur, therefore, would be a serious blow to their plans, and the apprehension to which the Japanese preparations gave rise in Russia was a sufficient vindication of the soundness of the Japanese decision to turn their efforts



in that direction. Orders were sent from the Tsar that the garrison were to hold out to the last, and General Kuropatkin, who commanded in Manchuria, was urged to use every endeavour to effect a relief. The actual form of the orders sent to the fleet has never been made public, but it has been generally understood that Vitgeft was instructed to endeavour to escape to Vladivostok if the fall of his base seemed inevitable. At the same time he was to bear in mind the supreme importance of maintaining his command intact as far as possible till the arrival of more ships. If those indeed were his orders they were only too likely to lead to catastrophe. Ambiguous instructions of that description may sometimes be issued to a leader of resolute character without doing much harm, because they afford him a certain degree of latitude of which he may be trusted to make the best use. But when placed in the hands of such a man as Vitgeft, who was nervous about taking great responsibility, they merely furnish a pretext for indecisive action at critical moments, and in the end, through taking no strong line one way or the other, he lost his whole fleet without inflicting any harm on the Japanese in the process.

As a result of these important considerations Port Arthur became the point on which the attention of both sides was chiefly centred, and the whole civilized world watched the progress of events with acute interest. It was a race against time, and the Russians, fearing that the Japanese flag would be flying over the harbour before the Baltic reinforcements could arrive, redoubled their endeavours to get the ships ready for service in sufficient numbers till every dockyard and arsenal hummed with activity day and night. The Japanese, as already observed, feared the contrary, and pressed their efforts to break through the defences by every means then known to the science of war. A most serious loss befell them, however, within ten days of the commencement of operations. The Russians had been much impressed by the methods which had caused the sinking of the *Petro-*

*pavlosk* and resolved to copy them should an opportunity arise. But as the Japanese capital ships never came within seven or eight miles of Port Arthur entrance, this could only be effected by laying mines in the high seas, far beyond the recognized limits of territorial waters—an extension of their use which had never been attempted before on a large scale, and was contrary at that time to all the accepted though unwritten principles which were supposed to safeguard the interests of neutral shipping during war. The Japanese had avoided laying mines outside the three-mile limit—although it must be admitted that they had less inducement to do so than their enemy—and expected the Russians to observe the same custom. In adopting this attitude they gave their adversaries credit for conducting hostilities under the obligations in general recognition among civilized States, but it said more for their ideas of honourable warfare than for their shrewdness in dealing with a somewhat unscrupulous foe, and in this matter an Asiatic race paid a very heavy penalty for their misplaced confidence in the fair dealing of a civilized European Power.

The Russians had observed that it was the practice of the Japanese battleship subdivision which took turns in watching the port by day to cruise at a distance of about ten miles from the entrance between certain bearings. They did not dare to send a mine-layer out so far by night on account of the Japanese destroyers on watch after dark, but fortune favoured them with a few days of foggy weather of which they took full advantage. On May 14 a mine-layer went out under cover of thick weather and mined this area. It was a hazardous venture deserving its meed of admiration, for if the fog had lifted, or if she had blundered into the Japanese cruisers which it obscured from view, her own fate would have been sealed; but she regained the harbour in safety. Next morning the Japanese battleships *Hatsuse*, *Shikishima*, and *Yashima* arrived on the spot for blockade duty, the weather having somewhat cleared, and the *Hatsuse* and *Yashima* both struck mines and were sunk. In the former

vessel the magazines were exploded and she went down very quickly with the majority of her crew, but the *Yashima* was kept afloat for some hours and great efforts were made to beach her, although without avail. This was the darkest day of the whole two years' war for Japan. Two of her six irreplaceable battleships were destroyed and her main fighting division thereby reduced by one-third at a single blow. The loss of the *Hatsuse* was soon made public and cast a gloom on the whole of Japan, but that of the *Yashima* was kept from the knowledge of all but the inner circles of the Government for months. For the authorities to whom it was known this depressing secret greatly increased the burden of responsibility and anxiety till the very end of the maritime war. Of battleships proper they could now only count four as against a Russian total of eleven afloat and building, and as at that point the strength of a fleet still depended mainly on that type of vessel—for which the Japanese armoured cruisers were but an indifferent substitute—they were now called upon to face greater odds than had ever confronted any navy actively endeavouring to maintain the command of the sea since the defeat of the Spanish Armada. It was impossible for them to withdraw to the shelter of their harbours—the usual policy of the weaker maritime combatant—for then their armies in the field must have collapsed for want of supplies. The future had to be faced, therefore, with whatever resolution they could summon and in the knowledge that all their plans, and indeed the whole ultimate fate of their country, must now more than ever depend on the valour and skill of their seamen. Fortunately for Japan the professional superiority of the human element in her fleet over that of her enemy was more than sufficient to restore the balance against her in ships.

As if the destruction of two battleships was not a sufficient blow, Fate destined that the Japanese were on the very same day to lose their finest light cruiser, the *Yoshino*, by collision with another of their ships in

the foggy weather. A heavy toll in life was exacted by this accident to add to the sorrows of Japan, and although the vessel herself was a unit of very minor fighting importance to the fleet as compared with a battleship, the circumstances of her loss accentuated the distress it caused. The *Yoshino* was only one of several large vessels which had been sunk by the ram of a consort in the previous thirty years in various navies—which included the *Vanguard*, the *Grosser Kurfurst*, and the *Victoria*—but none had been sunk by the ram of an enemy for nearly forty, nor has any large vessel been so destroyed in action since 1866 to this day. And yet so enduring are the conventionalities of design which, as already observed, influence naval opinion and naval architects, that this dangerous and useless appendage to fighting ships had not even begun to disappear in new types launched ten years after the *Yoshino* went down.

Within three weeks of landing, the bulk of the Port Arthur attacking army had advanced to the very narrow neck or isthmus to which the Liao-tung peninsula is contracted near the small town of Chinchow, about thirty-five miles from Port Arthur by land, and lying between Talien-wan Bay on its south side and Chinchow Bay on the north. This slender strip of land prevents Port Arthur and its immediately surrounding country from forming an island, and in the chart it presents the appearance of the stalk of a somewhat ragged leaf. Across this isthmus the Russians made their first stand on a chain of heights running from sea to sea known as the Nan-shan position. Although very strong by nature, the Japanese attacked it on May 26 and drove the enemy out after a battle lasting all day. The special tactical peculiarity of this engagement was that both combatants were assisted on their right and attacked on their left from the sea. The Russian right or southern flank rested on Talien-wan Bay—still in their possession—and to this point a coast-defence gunboat with a 9-inch gun had crept along by night undetected by

the Japanese, and reached a berth close to the shore where she was protected from being attacked by their ships by the numerous Russian mines in the bay. Her heavy shells proved a material help to the right of the Russian defence and forced the Japanese field-batteries of the left attack to change their position, nor did the Japanese make any real progress on that side throughout the day. On the opposite side of the isthmus, in Chinchow Bay, it was Japanese ships that were engaged in co-operation with the land forces, but owing to the shallowness of the water on that side they were compelled to lie far out and their assistance was not of great importance. The shallowness, however, was not without compensations to the Japanese, for in the end it enabled them to turn the Russian left flank by wading very far out and thus getting round in rear of the line of defence. When their position became no longer tenable the Russians fell back towards Port Arthur, and the Japanese were enabled to press forward without further opposition to accomplish their first purpose for capturing the whole shore of Talien-wan Bay as their new and permanent base. At the same time they were compelled to take steps to ensure that the besieging force was not exposed to the danger of an attack on their rear by a Russian relieving army advancing from Manchuria. As part of their arrangements for dealing with this danger, the third Japanese army, which was to have occupied the centre of the invading line in the original plans, was despatched on board its transports to Takushan, on the Manchurian coast at the head of the Bay of Korea, which had been its intended destination from the first, and there disembarked during the latter half of May. As a result of this move the Japanese had the centre as well as the right wing of the originally intended line in position for a forward movement by the end of that month, as a covering force for the siege. With the landing of the third army they had despatched a larger total force to wage war in hostile territory than had ever crossed the seas with that object before. And

what made this great operation further unique in history was the fact that it was undertaken against an enemy in possession of a numerically stronger fleet; not, indeed, actually present as a whole in the immediate theatre of war, but always a potential danger of the most serious character. It was a very bold line of policy to follow.

After the Japanese left army had landed on the Liao-tung peninsula the Tokio authorities decided that two of its divisions only would be required for the direct attack on Port Arthur, which they hoped to take with a rush, as they did when attacking it ten years before. The remainder of this army was therefore sent in the opposite direction to co-operate with the right and centre armies in Manchuria. Early in June Kuropatkin had set the Russian forces near Liao-yang in motion to relieve Port Arthur, urged thereto by Alexeieff, who was in Manchuria, and whose views were supported by his Government. It was said that Kuropatkin would have preferred to wait till in stronger force, and he was probably a better judge of what was possible than anyone else, but anxiety regarding the fortress was extreme in St. Petersburg and he was overruled. By the middle of June the relieving army came into collision with the Japanese forces in Manchuria and was signally defeated at the Battle of Telissu. This dashed all Russian hopes of effecting a relief by land, and the Government thereupon decided at last to make an effort to save it by an active use of the fleet. If the Japanese could be effectively attacked at sea it was perfectly obvious that the whole situation might be relieved, not only at Port Arthur but in Manchuria also; but their previous reluctance to attempt this step was not altogether without plausible reasons. They had hoped, as already observed, to maintain the fleet intact till the reinforcements arrived out from home, and for that purpose strove to relieve their base by land without risking the loss of the ships themselves in its defence. But after the defeat at Telissu this policy was no longer practicable, and as they were extremely anxious to retain Port Arthur as a base for

the new fleet whether the old fleet was still left afloat or not, it only remained to take the chances of a general action at sea as a last hope.

Although the fortress was completely cut off by land, the garrison still found it possible to communicate with Alexeieff and the higher authorities in Russia by occasionally sending out a very fast destroyer at night, which slipped round the end of the peninsula into the Gulf of Pe-chi-li under cover of darkness, and made for the coast town of Newchwang in Western Manchuria, at that time still in Russian hands. Partly by this means, and partly by the use of junks which passed unnoticed or unobserved through the blockade, a fairly frequent exchange of messages and orders was kept up all through the siege. On June 15, in pursuance of the new policy in regard to the use of the fleet, Alexeieff sent orders to Vitgeft to go out and attack Togo. For a month before this both the Japanese and the Russians had been mining the whole vicinity assiduously at night, and although the Russians knew the position of their own mine-fields they were nervous about those of the enemy. Sweeping operations took place regularly on what was, for those early days of mining warfare, an unprecedented and previously unthought-of scale, and the number of Japanese mines picked up was constantly increasing. When, therefore, Vitgeft received instructions to assume the offensive—of which he disapproved strongly himself—he began by redoubling the activities of the sweeping flotilla for a whole week before venturing forth. By June 23 he considered that the approaches were as safe for the move as they were ever likely to be, and at dawn on that day his fleet began to emerge, but so slow were the Russians at all times in the handling of their ships that it was noon before the last was out. Vitgeft stated afterwards that he intended to spend the night at sea and fall on the Japanese fleet at its anchorage at the Elliot Islands at daybreak next morning. This idea, however, gave his wary opponent so little credit for vigilance that it can scarcely be accepted as a seriously

planned operation. When the first Russian vessels appeared coming out of the entrance channel in the dim light of early dawn, the Japanese destroyers on lookout duty observed them at once and promptly reported their movements by wireless message to Togo. From the frequent exit of the Russian mine-layers for some time before this, Togo had already begun to doubt whether his assumption that the port had been effectively closed by the third blocking expedition was justified after all, but these had been vessels of the smaller classes, and it came quite as a surprise to hear that battleships were now coming out as well. Without delay, accordingly, he ordered his whole command to raise steam and prepare for action, although since the loss of the *Hatsuse* and *Yashima* his line had been still further reduced by the despatch of four of his armoured cruisers to operate against the enemy's vessels of the same class based on Vladivostok. Of efficient modern armoured ships, therefore, only eight were at his immediate disposal, and these were somewhat scattered, several being at sea on blockade and the rest at the anchorage. But by ten o'clock he was already under weigh with the four battleships that alone remained to the Japanese Navy, and steering to the south-westward, he recalled every detached vessel by wireless messages until all had joined him soon after midday.

Vitgeft's squadron of six battleships and an armoured cruiser, besides light craft, were under weigh and standing to seaward on a south-easterly course by one o'clock, but as they were preceded by a mine-sweeping flotilla of tugs and launches their progress was very slow at first. These were dropped when ten miles out and he then increased speed. Togo meanwhile had gone too far to the westward, and as he saw nothing of the Russians he turned back. This move drew the fleets towards each other, and at six o'clock he sighted the enemy about ten miles to the northward, when they had steamed about twenty miles from their base. Vitgeft reported that the sight of the Japanese battleships at sea came quite as a



surprise and upset his plans. It now looked as if the critical moment of the war had arrived, and such indeed was the belief in the Japanese Fleet. Two or three hours of daylight still remained with a full moon to follow, and rarely, if ever, had such an opportunity for making a mark on history fallen to the lot of any leader as was presented to the Russian admiral that evening. The seven armoured ships which formed his main line of battle carried in the total a heavier armament and a better protection than the eight under his opponent, and although he was inferior in lighter craft the discrepancy was not overwhelming. Positive orders to attack had come from his superior, and a reasonable prospect lay before him of achieving a victory which might have ended the war in resounding fashion. By so doing he would have demonstrated to all the world what a fleet can accomplish in modern times towards the overthrow of a whole plan of campaign, just as Nelson had demonstrated it a little more than a century before at the Nile, and Yi-sun three centuries before in the Straits of Tsushima. Even if defeated he might so much have reduced the Japanese Fleet in the process as to leave no formidable force for the outcoming ships from the Baltic to deal with on their arrival. Had Makaroff been in command, or such other Russian seaman of note as Koriloff or Nakhimoff, it seems almost a certainty that great events would have taken place on that occasion—not necessarily a decisive defeat of Russia's enemies, for the latter proved themselves more than a match for Vitgeft's squadron some weeks later—but events profoundly affecting the subsequent course of the war. But Vitgeft was not the man to grasp a great chance, or even to obey orders on emergency if we may judge by what happened. For half an hour he hesitated, while the fleets were some seven or eight miles apart but approaching on converging courses. Then he turned and headed back for Port Arthur. His officially reported reason for declining action was that darkness was coming on and he was afraid of the Japanese destroyers, but

that certainly does not explain his proceedings, because he could not hope to regain shelter from their attacks that night in any case. Mahan has described the vacillations in the mind of Brueys when Nelson's topsails were sighted on an August afternoon from the French flagship in Aboukir Bay, and watchers on the cliffs round Port Arthur on June 23, 1904, witnessed on the far southern horizon another scene of hesitation and uncertainty at a vitally important but fleeting moment of war. Vitgeft's actions betrayed a temperament which cannot decide on a definite line of action when confronted by an unexpected situation calling for prompt measures, and no such man is qualified to fly the flag of an admiral at sea, however capable he may be as an organizer or an administrator in office. In turning back he not only threw away an incomparable opportunity for striking a telling blow in his country's cause, but did little to secure the safety of his ships, for, as it was too late for them to get inside Port Arthur till daylight on the morrow they were bound to remain all night exposed to the Japanese torpedoes. It was even too late to distinguish properly the safe passage through their own minefields in the outer approach.

The Japanese were sorely disappointed to see the sterns of the Russian ships at a distance rendering it impossible to overtake them before they regained the protection of their shore batteries, but Togo resolved to do all he could with his destroyers and torpedo boats. These he immediately despatched ahead at full speed with orders to chase and attack the enemy and to keep on attacking all night. Catching the retreating battle fleet up on the last of the twilight, they fired their torpedoes, but misjudged the enemy's speed and made no hits. The battleships' return gunfire proved equally ineffective. The Russians hastened on, and in blundering through the outer roads the *Sevastopol* struck one of their own mines, which partially disabled although it did not sink her, but the others escaped misfortune and all anchored close to the shore under cover of the batteries

to await daylight. Here they were again attacked by the Japanese torpedo craft several times before the short summer night came to an end, but again all the torpedoes missed—in part, perhaps, because the direction of the wind and tide kept the Russians swung with their heads to seaward and rendered them small targets. In the morning the Japanese were compelled to draw out of range of the forts, and Vitgeft's whole squadron, including the badly damaged *Sevastopol*, re-entered the inner harbour. Their return in this inglorious fashion without fighting caused grievous regret in the fortress, where high hopes had existed as to the possible results of their excursion, and when the news reached Alexeieff he was furious. Certainly if an admiral in the British service had acted as Vitgeft did he would have been called before a court-martial to render an explanation of his conduct; but in the senior ranks of the Russian Navy an officer was almost immune from disciplinary measures.

Then followed six weeks of orders and exhortations from the Tsar himself and Alexeieff, and of protests and objections from the Admiral, in which it must be admitted that the latter was supported by the majority of his officers, though not by all. Russians are partial to councils of war, and to these Vitgeft constantly resorted. Alexeieff also approved of this method of arriving at decisions, perhaps in the hope that they would force the Admiral to be more enterprising. But the effect was just the opposite, for with two exceptions the assembled officers took the cue from their commander, and supported his contention that the fleet should remain where it was. The first council was convened on Vitgeft's own initiative, and a second by orders from the Viceroy after receiving the report of the first, with which he did not agree. Both assemblies, however, reported in the same sense. They declared that it was hopeless to attempt escape to Vladivostok, and urged as a further reason for remaining in Port Arthur that the presence of the fleet would so materially assist the defence that the garrison might hold out till relieved by sea from Europe. Lastly,

they contended that the Japanese mines were now so numerous that it would be impossible to reach safe open water. None of these objections proved to be valid in the end. It is true that when an escape to Vladivostok was attempted under imperative orders not long afterwards it failed, but that was because it was not resolutely pressed on against strenuous opposition, and it came within measurable distance of success even then. The presence of the fleet in the harbour at the end of the siege neither saved Port Arthur nor materially delayed its fall; and the assertion that the Japanese mines must be a fatal obstacle to movement proved groundless, for when the Russian ships did break out a month later the mines had been so effectively swept up that not a vessel was injured.

While the Russians were wasting all this time in fruitless talk the Japanese were acting. After the Nan-shan position had been forced, the two divisions of troops detailed for the attack on Port Arthur, under General Nogi, began a steady advance across the thirty-five miles of mountainous country which still intervened between their newly won ground and the circle of defences round the town, dockyard, and harbour. All through June and July they pressed the Russians back step by step till by the end of the latter month they had driven the defenders right back into their stronghold, and although the original Japanese hope of carrying it by a rapid and direct assault was not destined to attain fruition, Nogi surrounded it in the grip of an ever closer investment from the day he arrived under its guns. For the greater part of the aforesaid two months the struggling armies had faced each other in a succession of positions extending right across the peninsula from sea to sea, and light-draught ships were able to join in the flank fighting on both sides as at Nan-shan. The Russians did not dare to send them round to the north coast for fear of meeting Japanese cruisers on the way, but they laid a line of mines for miles parallel to the coast on the south, at a sufficient distance from the shore to leave a clear channel inside these mines known only to themselves, and behind

the protection of this barrier their gunboats and destroyers were able to move without much interference from the enemy's vessels, and to operate in support of the right wing of their army. It is said that the Japanese left-wing troops suffering from the fire of the Russian gunboats complained on one or two occasions that they were not receiving enough assistance from their own. But although Togo never shirked fighting when the risk was justified, he could not afford to send ships of his decreasing fleet into mined areas, and this attitude was justified by the loss of a small light cruiser when he tried. Thereafter he was compelled to use destroyers only in supporting the troops near the southern coast-line, whose very light gun armaments produced little effect. Both fleets suffered the loss of several small craft in the constant skirmishing and mine-laying that went on all through this period, but the losses did not materially affect the naval balance, and it was not till July 27 that any important vessel suffered. On that date the *Bayan*, the only armoured cruiser in the Port Arthur fleet, was taking part in one of these outlying affairs when she struck a Japanese mine. But once again the remarkable good fortune of the Russians held good, for although badly damaged she managed to regain the harbour. Nevertheless, her temporary disablement, together with that of the *Sevastopol*, reduced the Russian armoured squadron from seven to five ships for the time, which with the daily increasing danger in which their base now stood was a serious matter. No department of the Russian naval service was so efficient, however, as that which dealt with repairs, and each one of the five capital ships which returned at various times with enormous holes blown in their bottoms was rendered fit for service again in a remarkably short space of time, considering the limited resources at the disposal of the Admiral Superintendent of the dockyard and his shipwrights. Many of the smaller vessels which suffered in action or by accident were also restored to a serviceable condition with equal despatch.

When the news was received in Russia that the enemy had arrived close before the defences of the town the Tsar's Government realized that before very long the waters of the harbour might come under the fire of Japanese guns and cease to afford a safe shelter for the ships. The Russians had hoped at one time that Nogi's advance might be arrested at a line of passes in the hills about fifteen miles from the port, and therefore beyond bombarding range of the anchorage and basins. But this line the defenders had failed to hold, and it was now resolved in St. Petersburg that the fleet must be ordered to quit at all costs. The report of Vitgeft's councils of war, to which reference has been made above, came into the hands of the higher authorities about the same time as the intelligence of the investment, but to all his recommendations that he should remain where he was they turned a deaf ear. By command of the Tsar peremptory orders were despatched to the Russian Admiral, reaching him on August 8, in which he was directed to break out of Port Arthur with every battleship as soon as possible and use every effort to reach Vladivostok. These instructions left Vitgeft no option but to obey, and a personal reason for compliance perhaps existed also, for it is said that after his return without fighting on June 23 Alexeieff had notified him that his supersession was imminent. Readers of history may notice how it repeats itself here in the similarity between the situation of Villeneuve in Cadiz with Nelson outside, and that of Vitgeft in Port Arthur with Togo awaiting his appearance. Neither the French nor the Russian commander wished to leave his place of shelter to encounter fierce and immediate attack, although neither was a personal coward. But both were sent to defeat by peremptory orders from the highest authority to whom they owed allegiance, backed by a threat affecting their professional reputation.

Early in August indirect fire was opened by the Japanese siege-guns over the Port Arthur heights into the harbour; and while the fleet were busily preparing to

sail on the very day after receiving the Tsar's command one of the battleships was hit and holed below the water-line, and another in her battery. The dockyard also began to suffer. This hastened the preparations for departure, for as Vitgeft was obliged to leave he naturally desired that his vessels should make the sortie in the best fighting condition possible; and by working all night he was ready to sail on his fateful enterprise by dawn on August 10, less than forty-eight hours after receiving the order. It was to prove an historic day. Six battleships, four light cruisers, and eight destroyers constituted the Russian force, the damaged *Bayan* being left behind. Vitgeft held the supreme command in the *Tsarevitch*, with Ukhtomski and Rietzenstein as divisional leaders. By 9 a.m. on a calm and somewhat misty day all were out, and, having followed close astern of the mine-sweepers till well clear of the land, course was shaped to the south-eastward at full speed with the *Tsarevitch* leading. No Japanese vessels were actually in sight, but an early haze still obscured the horizon and necessitated a sharp lookout. Besides the eight destroyers detailed for Vladivostok, six more were to keep company with the fleet till the evening and then return to Port Arthur, having insufficient coal endurance for the whole voyage.

Meanwhile Togo had foreseen coming events. Knowing that the siege batteries of his soldier colleagues were now within range of the harbour, he rightly anticipated a move on Vitgeft's part at an early date if the latter intended moving at all, and made his preparations accordingly. The crisis of the war lay before him. If the Russian fleet or any considerable portion of it succeeded in reaching Vladivostok the whole situation would indeed pass beyond any reasonable hope of redemption for Japan. When the Chinese had escaped from Port Arthur to Wei-hai-wei ten years before no great difficulty had been involved in attacking them in their new refuge, but to repeat that precedent by following up and attacking the Russian fleet if it escaped to Vladivostok lay quite outside the scope of practicable operations with the

resources at the disposal of Japan. Every available man and gun was required for the campaign in Manchuria and the siege of Port Arthur, neither of which could now be abandoned without endangering the ultimate success of the war. Much more formidable difficulties attended a siege of Vladivostok than that of the other fortress, for although the landward defences were weaker its relief would be a much easier matter for the Russians, and the Japanese army tied down already to Manchuria. would not be well placed to act as a covering force to the besiegers as it now acted for the troops investing Port Arthur. For these reasons, if Vitgeft's ships should reach this northern refuge their future safety became assured, and there they could lie until their consorts from Europe—now on the eve of starting—had arrived in the Far East and effected a junction. To the overwhelming force of twelve battleships represented by this combination Togo could only oppose four, backed by some armoured cruisers, and against such a preponderance in numbers not even the Japanese superiority in fighting efficiency could reasonably hope to prevail. If vanquished on the sea, all Japanese successes on the land would count for nothing, and the humiliating experiences of the sixteenth century would undergo repetition on a terribly aggravated scale. To stave off this catastrophe and ensure a superiority on the water till the war was ended, defeat of the Russian Navy in detail was necessary, as already observed, and the first step towards that object had constantly engaged Togo's attention. If Vitgeft's ships came out, therefore, it was imperative that they should either be sunk or driven back to Port Arthur, and under no circumstances whatever could they be allowed to reach Vladivostok.

If the chart is examined it will be seen that a fleet leaving Port Arthur for the northern Russian headquarters base must first pass through that part of the Yellow Sea which lies between the eastern coast of Shantung and the shores of Korea. This exit, although many miles wide, involves a south-easterly course, and



Togo watched its whole span. Expecting an early sortie by the Russians, his fleet had occupied a position near the centre of the area in question for several days, with the cruiser divisions disposed in three groups widely separated, on the lookout. There they were cruising to and fro under easy steam on the morning of August 10, with the seamen lying round their guns from hour to hour in constant readiness for the order to "close up," and the engine-room staffs with the safety-valves just on the simmer waiting about at their stations ready at any moment for the equally important order to "stoke up." At half-past eleven both orders rang through the ships simultaneously as the signalmen aloft reported the whole Russian fleet in sight to the north-west, twelve miles distant but approaching at full speed. Togo's main line consisted of the four Japanese battleships and three armoured cruisers, and in the general area these were supported by eight light cruisers and older vessels and forty-six torpedo craft. In the Straits of Tsushima, about two days' steaming to his rear, lay the detached squadron of four armoured cruisers and three light cruisers under Kamimura, hitherto engaged in guarding the southern sea communications against the raids of the Russian vessels at Vladivostok, but now warned to keep a sharp watch for any of Vitgeft's ships breaking through the straits that might succeed in getting past Togo himself.

When the Russian Admiral sighted the main Japanese force right in his path the latter happened for the moment to be moving slowly to the westward at right angles to his advance. His first effort, therefore, was directed to taking what advantage might be possible of this movement to get past them to the rear; but Togo turned and headed him off, thereby bringing the two fleets within long range and starting the fight with their heavier guns. Finding his advance barred in that direction, Vitgeft turned and tried to rush round to the westward, but again Togo forestalled him by a turn towards the same point of the compass. This brought the fleets closer still, and

the firing became general; but in moving westward Togo went too far, and his adversary doubled for the third time with success, getting right past the Japanese to the east. Thus far, although a certain amount of damage had been suffered on both sides, no vessel had been disabled, and the Russian prospects now began to look promising. Togo had a slight advantage in speed, but could not overtake the enemy without delay unless by exposing the head of his own line, with his best ships, to the concentrated fire of the Russians as he caught them up—a dangerous proceeding—and although he might succeed in sinking the light cruisers forming their rear, that would not prevent the escape of the capital ships. In this critical and anxious position, when an immediate decision of some kind was necessary, the Japanese Admiral took a step displaying his qualities as a great leader. With his advantage in speed it was just possible by making a long detour out of range that he might get ahead of the enemy again, but the venture was risky with the day already far advanced and the possibility of a breakdown in his own ships from the extreme strain thrown on their machinery. Half-measures never appealed to Togo, however, and he determined to forgo the comparatively cheap but certain credit of destroying one or two light cruisers within reach for the chance of a decisive success against the main force of the enemy. With that singleness of purpose which Napoleon had declared to be the secret of success in war, he steered at once on a somewhat divergent course to the Russians at full speed, taking his ships out of range for the time. For a long while the firing ceased as the contending lines diverged, and the situation became a struggle between the engineers. Each fleet steamed its utmost, constant urgings to increase the speed coming down to the engine-rooms from on deck, and the sweating stokers in every ship fed the furnaces as fast as they could throw the coal in. But the Japanese were not to be denied, and after three hours' arduous racing had drawn ahead and closed again to fighting range, although with only two

hours of daylight in which to defeat the enemy if it was to be done at all.

Firing now recommenced all along the lines, sustained with furious energy on both sides, but for an hour without decisive effect, for although the Russians were suffering heavily under the superior gunnery of their opponents, a defect in the design of the Japanese ammunition disabled a third of their own main armaments and handicapped Togo's men most dangerously. Six o'clock was near at hand, the approach of night was entirely in favour of the Russians, and all appearances suggested that Vitgeft's efforts were destined to be crowned with success, when a sudden turn in the course of events altered the whole situation. Two 800-pound shells struck the forepart of the Russian flagship almost simultaneously, and rarely in history has any incident so literally resembled a blow from the hand of Fate. As the whole line were in hot action, it has never been ascertained definitely from which ship of Togo's either projectile was started on its flight, but if their fragments could have been collected they might well have been placed in a special shrine for the veneration of Japanese posterity. One burst on the bridge, killing Vitgeft himself with most of his staff and disabling the remainder, including the signal party. The other hit the conning-tower, killing or stunning every soul inside, including the navigating officer, the quartermaster at the helm, and the engine-room telegraph operators. Thus when in a few seconds the onrushing vessel emerged from the clouds of smoke caused by the explosions, not a sign of life was visible on her deck, and every officer and man concerned in the supreme handling and direction, not only of the *Tsarevitch* herself, but of the Russian fleet, lay prostrate where he fell. As the other officers were below at the guns and nobody from above was able to bring down the intelligence, some little time elapsed before the fifth in seniority, who now succeeded to the command, knew that his presence was urgently required on deck, during which period the ship was still at full speed but under no

sort of control. Devastating consequences ensued, for by some effect never yet explained the explosions had forced the helm hard over, and once again it was just as if the hand of Fate had struck down the helmsman, and then, seizing the wheel, had whirled the spokes hard-a-starboard and held them there. Answering her helm at once, the vessel swerved sharply to port and kept on turning till she was charging back among the ships near the rear of her own line.

This was the most critical minute of the war.

The inexplicable movements of the flagship bewildered the whole fleet and threw everything into confusion. In the two vessels stationed next astern the captains at first followed in her wake, not knowing what had happened, and thinking that the Admiral was turning intentionally for some reason of his own; but seeing their leader continue to circle soon realized that something was wrong, and resumed the original course. This movement, however, had necessarily thrown them out of line to port for the time. The ships farther to the rear, seeing the flagship blundering right round towards them, were compelled to sheer off to starboard to avoid collision, and thus the whole formation was broken up. Even then order might have been restored had it not been for another fatal complication. By the time the *Tsarevitch* had nearly completed her involuntary circle the officer next in command had rushed up on to the half-wrecked bridge with a few men, and succeeded in passing a signal to Rear-Admiral Ukhtomski in the *Peresvyet* reporting Vitgeft's death. Ukhtomski then for the second time succeeded to the fleet command in action by the death of a Commander-in-Chief, for he it was who had been temporary successor to the gallant Makaroff. To extricate the Russians from their utter confusion as quickly as possible, he endeavoured to make the general signal "Follow me," but as both the masts of the *Peresvyet* had already been shot away no flags could be hoisted high enough to be seen above the smoke pouring out from the funnels and batteries, and as no other ship had

as yet discovered the change in command none paid any special attention to the movements of Ukhtomski. All were still plunging ahead at full speed and now in some danger of collision, all looked in vain for signals for a lead, and half were masking the fire of the others. Seeing the plight of their enemy, the Japanese closed the range and concentrated such a pulverizing fire on the mass that the nearer ships were almost obscured by the splashes of the shells that missed and the smoke of those that hit; and finding this punishment unendurable, the Russians gave up further effort, and turning in confusion to the

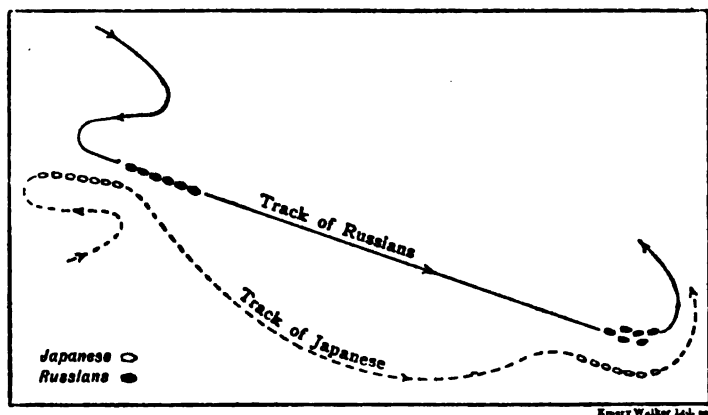


FIG. 7. — DIAGRAM SHOWING FIRST AND LAST POSITIONS OF ARMoured DIVISIONS AT BATTLE OF YELLOW SEA. (NOT TO SCALE.)

northward headed back towards Port Arthur. Togo had won, as he deserved to do, but only at the eleventh hour, and although his long task was still far from completion, he never again stood so near a collapse of all his plans as he did on that evening. Two of the Russian ships were too badly damaged to reach Vladivostok, it is true, but if the remainder had been able to hold on till nightfall their eventual escape would have been much more difficult to prevent.

When the enemy turned the Japanese followed, and kept up the firing for a time, but in a fast failing light

and rising mist which obscured the retreating vessels altogether within half an hour. A very dark night then fell on the scene, in which the widely scattered battleships, cruisers, and torpedo craft of both sides moved in various directions at high speeds and in constant danger of collision. None showed any lights, some for the purposes of escape and others to conceal their approach; and as the prevailing mist before darkness set in had made it difficult or impossible for the detached cruisers and destroyers to discern the general situation, these latter merely realized that a general movement towards Port Arthur was apparently taking place, but found themselves unable to distinguish friend from foe in the dimly visible shapes speeding northward in the night. Togo, knowing that the Russians would never be able to re-form without flashing so many signals about as must attract every Japanese destroyer for miles round, and not caring to expose his own heavy ships to the risk of mistaken attacks, abandoned the chase, and drew off with the battle squadron to the southward; thereby remaining between the Russians and Vladivostok should any still try to break through under cover of darkness. The Russian battleships kept together more or less, but under no guidance, and chiefly because each captain, seeing the others standing towards Port Arthur, assumed that the Admiral was giving an unsignalled lead which he was bound to follow. With the exception of the *Tsarevitch*, all arrived back in the outer roads before dawn, officers and men utterly worn out by twenty-four hours of strenuous duty at their stations, decks encumbered with dead and wounded, and two ships so badly damaged that only the calm weather saved them from foundering. The *Tsarevitch* lost touch in the darkness, and her temporary commanding officer, having no orders to the contrary, believed that it was his duty still to push on for Vladivostok. But the wrecked condition of the funnels so greatly reduced the speed of the ship that the attempt became hopeless, and he altered course accordingly for the near German port of Kiao-chao;

where, after narrowly escaping attack by the Japanese destroyers, he arrived next day, and not being able to leave within twenty-four hours was interned by orders from Berlin with the ship and all her crew till the end of hostilities. Three of the Russian light cruisers and five of the destroyers also broke back through the Japanese flotillas during the night, resolved not to return to Port Arthur on any account, but only one persisted in trying to reach Vladivostok, in which she very nearly succeeded. Two of these cruisers made for neutral ports on the chance of lenient treatment and possible permission to partake further in the war, in which hope, after evading the Japanese destroyers—by whom they were mistaken for Japanese ships—one arrived at Shanghai and the other at the French port of Saigon, but neither was allowed to depart again till peace was proclaimed. The third was the little *Novik*, whose energetic commander made for Kiao-chao first to get more coal. Remaining there only for a few hours, he was allowed by the German neutrality laws to sail again, and steered thence right out into the Pacific eastward of Japan altogether, then north about to Saghalin to coal once more. Unfortunately for him, the *Novik* was sighted and reported from a Japanese lookout station in passing through the Kuna-shiri Channel. Two Japanese cruisers started in pursuit, which found her coaling at Saghalin when only a few hours distant from safety. A gallant but ineffectual struggle finished the career of this notable little vessel, the performer of several exploits in the many skirmishes round Port Arthur which evoked the admiration of the Japanese themselves. Of the five escaping destroyers, three went to Kiao-chao and were interned, a fourth suffered a like fate at Shanghai, and the fifth was driven ashore by Japanese destroyers near Wei-hai-wei and wrecked.

As the first definite step of the Japanese towards ultimate success on the water, the Battle of the Yellow Sea—to give it the usual name—cannot fail to be recognized as one of the decisive events of history. Although

none of the Russian vessels was sunk, not one reached Vladivostok, and the action destroyed the efficiency of the Russian Pacific fleet altogether as a fighting organization, thereby relieving Japan from a constant source of heavy anxiety. Of the six Russian battleships engaged, one ceased by internment to count for further service to her country, two were damaged beyond the resources of Port Arthur to repair, and the other three had not only suffered heavy losses to their crews but expended nearly all their 12-inch ammunition, which they could not replace. Nothing now remained to them but self-destruction or capture with the fall of the fortress, whence with one notable exception they never again emerged under the flag of St. Andrew. The unfortunate Vitgeft, however, atoned for all his past errors and hesitations by death in action, which entitles his memory to the lasting respect of the brotherhood of arms. By the events of that day his redoubtable adversary laid the foundation of his enduring and worldwide reputation.

Four days later this decisive Japanese victory was amplified by the results of a cruiser action in the Straits of Tsushima generally known as the Battle of Ulsan. Some retrospect is necessary to an understanding of the previously existing situation in that part of the maritime theatre of war. Several unimportant sea-trips had been carried out earlier in the year by the three Russian armoured cruisers stationed at Vladivostok under Rear-Admiral Bezobrazoff, in the course of one of which only fog had saved them from the Japanese squadron in search, as already observed on a previous page. With the exception of one small Japanese transport, caught and sunk while engaged on a special minor expedition near the north-east coast of Korea, and a very few small steamers destroyed, these raids produced no result beyond causing a feeling of uneasiness to the Japanese public. But his continued good luck in evading Admiral Kamimura emboldened Bezobrazoff to extend the scope of his enterprises, and in the middle of June he made a dash right south till on the main line of Japanese sea com-



munications, only twenty miles from the western entrance to the Straits of Shimonoseki and forty from the island of Tsushima, where Kamimura happened to be coaling at anchor. Through this area a constant stream of shipping passed day and night along the main artery of supply to the land theatres of war, and the Russians fell in almost at once with four large transports carrying troops and munitions. One escaped towards Shimonoseki. Two, however, were sunk with 2,000 reinforcements for the front who refused to surrender, and a whole important siege-train destined for Port Arthur. The fourth, although twice torpedoed, remained afloat, and as a drizzling mist caused the Russians to fear that Kamimura might approach unobserved, they left the damaged vessel and stood north again, thereby just escaping once more, for a small Japanese cruiser had sighted them and called up Kamimura by wireless, who was under way as fast as he could heave his anchors out of the ground and heading full speed for the scene, but arrived too late. This incident occasioned a great popular protest in Japan, as is so often the case in war, when public ignorance of the difficulties of some particular branch of defence makes a people impatient of any reverse or delay, and frequently clamorous for the recall of an able officer doing his utmost for their interests. Lord Hawke was burnt in effigy in London on the very day when he was chasing the French fleet to utter destruction in Quiberon Bay and saving England from serious danger of invasion; and only by the firmness of the Japanese Minister of Marine was Kamimura saved from censure for not achieving the impossible feat of being in two places at once. A fortnight later the Russians tried to repeat the operation, arriving on the scene towards evening, but were sighted this time by the Japanese Admiral before effecting any damage, although once again they escaped under cover of night.

Then they changed their ground, and a fortnight later still—that is to say, in the middle of July—sailed from Vladivostok for the eastern or Pacific coast of Japan,

where several merchant vessels were caught and sunk, both Japanese and neutral. Bezobrazoff had been succeeded by Rear-Admiral Iessen, who displayed a shrewd judgment in the selection of his point of attack, placing the Japanese in a dilemma. Kamimura could not be sent so far round as the east coast without exposing the line of communications to the westward to a repetition of the previous raid, should Iessen suddenly move there undiscovered. Nor would the situation permit of the withdrawal of a single armoured ship from Togo, because the Battle of the Yellow Sea, although near at hand, had not yet been fought, and Vitgeft required the closest watching. Very possibly Iessen had some hope that his appearance to the eastward of Japan, near an unprotected coastline, would alarm the Japanese sufficiently to make them recall some ships from off Port Arthur, and so facilitate Vitgeft's escape; but, if so, he was disappointed. The Japanese authorities kept their heads, and although popular excitement ran high at the discovery that a Russian squadron was within a few hours' steaming of Yokohama, the Government realized that these depredations on shipping represented a subsidiary reverse of the kind absolutely unavoidable in maritime war, never justifying any reduction of the force at the main points of contact with the enemy, where in the present case a critical situation was rapidly developing as they tightened their grip on the Russian pivotal fortress. And so, although Iessen steamed about at large for a whole fortnight until his coal was getting low, and returned in safety to his base, his movements never produced the slightest effect on the main course of the war. Nevertheless, although its direct fruits were unimportant, his cruise has a somewhat special historical interest, as the first example anywhere of the immense difficulties of dealing with an elusive raider under modern conditions, when the whole seas lie before him; a difficulty illustrated on a still wider scale ten years later by the performances of German cruisers.

Reaching Vladivostok again on August 1, Iessen

remained in harbour until early on the 11th, when, on being informed that the Port Arthur fleet had broken out, but remaining ignorant that they had been driven back, he started at once with his three powerful ships in the hope of meeting and reinforcing them as they passed through the Straits of Tsushima. Meanwhile Kamimura, who was lying at Tsushima Island at the end of a telegraph cable, had also been informed that Vitgeft had started. Weighing immediately, he steered first to the westward to support Togo, but heard from one of Togo's scouts that the Russians had been driven back, except three light cruisers of whose whereabouts nothing was known. Assuming that the latter were making for Vladivostok, he turned back to the eastward so as to keep ahead of them if that was their intention, and steered in that direction all through the night of the 12th. And now at last his luck changed, for it so happened that he was steaming unawares towards the very same point as Iessen. The two squadrons actually ran a short distance past each other in the dark without knowing it, but at daybreak were only eight miles apart, each having arrived at a position where they had intended awaiting developments, with the Japanese to the northward and therefore between Iessen and Vladivostok. Sighting the enemy at 4.30 a.m., Iessen started immediately for home, trying to dash round beyond range first on one side and then on the other, but was unable to avoid being brought to action, and a hard running fight ensued. After an hour of heavy firing on both sides the Russian cruiser *Rurik* was damaged in the steering gear and became unmanageable. The Japanese then poured so heavy a fire on the disabled ship that she was soon reduced to a wreck, and in spite of determined efforts to cover and save her, Iessen was compelled to abandon her to save the other two. Leaving the *Rurik* to be finished off by two Japanese light cruisers—detached on scouting duty for the night but recalled by urgent wireless messages—Kamimura chased the other Russians for three hours more, inflicting terrific punishment, and

then broke off the engagement and turned back. What precise motives influenced him in abandoning the chase are not clear, but it may perhaps be conjectured that he was still anxious about the three cruisers which he had been warned had escaped past Togo, and after his previous experience in the middle of June did not like to get too far from the line of communications. By this time the crippled *Rurik* had been left forty miles astern, but the two light cruisers carried out their orders, and after a gallant but ineffectual defence she sank under their fire, and all her surviving crew were taken prisoners. It transpired afterwards that the other two Russian vessels were so terribly battered by the Japanese shells that half an hour's more fighting would probably have ended their careers. As it was, they reached Vladivostok, but only after losing very heavily in men, and in such a wrecked condition as to be unfit for service for many months. When next they did venture to sea long after, one of the pair—namely, the *Gromoboi*, the finest cruiser in either of the belligerent navies—ran ashore and was only salvaged with difficulty after sustaining serious injury.

The battles of the Yellow Sea and Ulsan so far changed the general situation that by the middle of August the second phase in the maritime war had come to an end. Japanese prospects of ultimate victory were still far from assured, and her military position in the Asiatic Continent could never be other than unstable as long as the Russians possessed in their formidable Baltic fleet a force competent to challenge, or even seriously abridge, the Japanese command of the sea. But the first step towards defeating the Russian Navy in detail—the only possible procedure offering reasonable hopes of ultimate success—had been at last accomplished. It is true that the majority of the Russian ships in the East were still afloat, but few could be fit for service again for a long period, and any chances of effecting a junction with the fleet about to start from Europe had practically vanished. For the Japanese, therefore, the first great danger was past, and the condition of affairs was now released from

the heavy anxiety attendant on the first period of the war. Some months at least of freedom from any risks to their maritime predominance lay immediately ahead, in which the campaign in Manchuria might be pressed and extended indefinitely in so far as the safety of supplies and reinforcements was concerned, and the complete absence of any danger to their home territories enabled the whole army to be sent to the front. In other countries also the changed conditions produced their effect. Expert and popular opinion alike began to veer round to the view that the Japanese had some prospects of worsting the so-called "Colossus of the North" after all—an opinion reflected in the first recovery of Japanese securities from the collapse consequent on the prevalence of the opposite view at the outbreak of war. Thus, although the tremendous duel was still in its early rounds, the fine exploits of the Japanese seamen had so far at least justified their country in the bold venture of embarking on a great oversea enterprise in the face of a numerically more powerful enemy, on no surer grounds than a confidence in their valour and superior skill. Together with their heroic comrades of the army they had proved themselves beyond all doubt to be fully equal to meeting a European adversary, for on both elements victory had lain with the Japanese arms. But neither antagonist had yet received his adversary's point in a vital part.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE FINAL PHASE OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE MARITIME WAR

By the end of August the war had lasted for nearly eight months, and the events related in the previous chapter gave a fresh stimulus to Japanese efforts, and in some respects a new direction to the efforts of their enemies. The defenders of Port Arthur had realized that a successful issue to the attempt of their fleet to reach Vladivostok would lead to the withdrawal of the majority of the Japanese ships to another area, and thereby to a possible relaxation of the blockade and a lessening of the difficulty of obtaining supplies and intelligence from the outer world. For other reasons besides the blow to their national pride, therefore, the return of the shattered battle squadron produced a deep depression on the garrison, and their only consolation lay in the hope that the armaments and crews of the ships might be applied towards strengthening the land defences sufficiently to enable the fortress to hold out until relieved by the fleet from Europe or the army in Manchuria—a hope which the majority of the naval officers also entertained. The great and decisive land battles in Manchuria had yet to be fought, and various rumours circulated through the officers' quarters and barrack-rooms as to the measures Kuropatkin was supposed to be taking for a second attempt to come to their rescue. Abandoning any idea of further sorties, the naval command threw itself into the work of assisting the troops; the damaged ships being relieved of every gun that could be mounted in a useful position on shore, and large portions of their crews allotted to sections on the line of defence. Thus for a second time in history were officers and men of the

Russian Navy withdrawn from their proper element to fight and bleed in mud, but with this great difference—that whereas Korniloff's crews in the batteries of Sevastopol were never allowed a chance to lay the guns of the Black Sea fleet on their enemy's ships before the transfer of their energies to the shore, the Russians at Port Arthur had fought and suffered in a fleet action. Even now the Russian Government did not altogether approve of this diversion of effort, for although doubtful of the possibility of saving the fortress, they still clung to the hope that the ships might somehow escape. Not improbably the Staff at the St. Petersburg Admiralty placed some reliance on the knowledge that Togo's vessels must be seriously in need of refit and overhaul after the incessant strain of the past seven months, and were sanguine that they might be prevented from returning to Japan if any signs of naval activity could still be maintained at Port Arthur. The responsibility for depriving the Russian ships of a large part of their fighting equipment rested with Rear-Admiral Ukhtomski, by whose orders the step had been taken, although, like Vitgeft, he had first obtained the support of a council of war in which only two dissentient voices were raised. But the supreme authorities marked their disapproval of this action, and of his return to Port Arthur after the Battle of the Yellow Sea, by appointing Captain Viren, of the *Bayan*, as Vitgeft's successor in the fleet command, who was not only junior to Ukhtomski but to all the flag officers and captains present. Viren had earned a reputation for enterprise earlier in his career, but his accession to power made no difference now, for as he considered that the state of his ships made any attempt at escape hopeless, he followed the policy of Ukhtomski in directing all his energies towards the assistance of the garrison.

With the Japanese a new idea took shape. It was resolved to press the attack on Port Arthur with redoubled energy, in the hope of capturing the ships inside in time enough to refit them for service under the Japanese

flag before the fleet from the Baltic could arrive. Such a reinforcement would indeed have turned the scale against Russia so decisively, that it may be doubted whether the Baltic Fleet would ever have started had the plan succeeded. But Port Arthur offered a very formidable problem indeed to an assailant, and no human endeavour could precipitate its fall if stoutly defended. The Japanese therefore began by trying negotiations for surrender, and on August 16 sent in a message under a flag of truce pointing out that the fall of the fortress was inevitable, and suggesting capitulation to save useless sacrifice of life. They offered also a free exit to all neutrals and non-combatants whether the proposal for surrender was entertained or otherwise, but the Russians rejected both offers. Nothing remained, therefore, but to continue the siege, and at the end of the month a special general assault was delivered lasting for several days, in which the Japanese columns were hurled against salient points, only to be beaten back again and again after suffering 15,000 casualties and leaving acres of ground in front of the defences covered with their unburied dead. For the immediately succeeding few weeks they did not repeat the effort, but the failure was to some extent compensated for in other directions by the great battles of Liao-yang and Sha-ho in Manchuria, where the Japanese forced a Russian retirement over a large area never regained by the enemy. These victories, however, although effectually frustrating any intentions Kuropatkin might have entertained of relieving Port Arthur, did nothing to expedite its actual capture. In September the besiegers brought a new weapon into play in the shape of 11-inch howitzers, and as the pulverizing impact of their huge shells demolished everything on which they fell, preparations were made for another grand assault in October. This was delivered at the end of that month, but, although conducted with reckless courage, met with no better success than the first, suffering repulse at all points after a wholesale slaughter of the attacking regiments.



Meanwhile the outcoming fleet from the Baltic had actually started at last from Libau on October 16. This definite move compelled the Japanese to look ahead very seriously, and the most pressing matter requiring early attention was the restoration of their own ships to first-class fighting condition. Armaments and machinery were alike badly worn down, and hulls required proper repair after the considerable damage suffered on August 10, which had only been patched up. Moreover, the human element was greatly in need of a period of rest after the incessant demands made on officers and men during the previous seven months, especially as a fresh ordeal of the severest nature was in prospect. It was calculated that the Baltic Fleet might arrive in the theatre of war by the end of January, and although that estimate was greatly exceeded, the Japanese authorities were compelled to err on the side of caution in a matter of national life or death. Togo was warned accordingly that the watch outside Port Arthur must be relaxed at the end of November by the withdrawal of the bulk of his command, so as to give the dockyards and arsenals the full two months they would require working day and night to recondition the ships. Realizing that their hopes of capturing the Russian vessels inside in time to fit them for early service as units in the Japanese Fleet had now no chances of fulfilment, instructions were given to the military authorities commanding the siege to make every effort to destroy them. The 11-inch howitzers already constituted a menace to their safety, but the hills all round the harbour prevented the batteries of the attack from seeing inside, and the firing was necessarily random when conducted against invisible targets which frequently moved, and whose precise position could never be calculated. A third general assault was therefore delivered with heroic valour at the end of November, and when that failed like the others—after the extermination of entire Japanese battalions—the besiegers turned their immediate attention towards the capture of some point whence a view of the harbour could be ob-

tained, and the fire of the bombarding howitzers controlled by direct observation of the targets. Such a point existed not very far from a part of the advanced Japanese trenches, on a steep double-peaked eminence known on the Staff maps as "203-Metre Hill," towards gaining the saddle-backed summit of which they directed their utmost efforts with ultimate success on December 5 after several days' fighting. The capture of this short ridge of bare and broken ground was only successful after one of the bloodiest struggles of the siege, but its value to Japan at that stage of the war could not have been greater had it been paved with gold, for now every shell from the attacking batteries could drive a nail in the coffin of the Russian Pacific fleet. The Russians made most gallant attempts to recover this precious scrap of the Port Arthur skyline, but in vain, and its definite loss was the first indication that their powers of resistance were at last on the wane. The soldiers of the Tsar had often shown that under proper leadership and inspiration they could hold a position entrusted to their charge with a stubbornness second to none, and never proved it more signally than in this historic siege. But human endurance has its limits, and reduced numbers, short rations, disease, and deferred hope, were all beginning to tell. The end was now near at hand, and unfortunately for Russia it would appear to have been hastened by dissensions in the councils of the defence. With 203-Metre Hill in the possession of the Japanese, however, as an eye for their attack, the fate of the fleet was certain whether the fortress held out or surrendered. Under such conditions, indeed, it had ceased to fulfil the very function for which it had ever been fortified at all—that is to say, as the Russian naval headquarters—and with some the view has been held that the Japanese need not have pressed the siege further, but left a containing force in the trenches and sent the balance to join the field-armies in Manchuria, which were outnumbered by their opponents. It is said that this point did receive attention in Tokio, but the importance of preventing the out-

coming fleet from the Baltic from finding any base available except Vladivostok overruled all other considerations.

The Japanese made immediate use of their new point of vantage, and on the morning of the day after it passed into their hands opened fire from their heavy howitzers under direction from a "spotting" post on the hill connected by telephone with the batteries. In a few hours the Russian battleship *Retvizan* was sunk. On the next day the battleships *Pobieda* and *Peresvyet* and the light cruiser *Pallada* all suffered the same fate. Two days later, again, it was the turn of the *Bayan*. This left no armoured vessel remaining except the *Sevastopol*, for the *Poltava* had already been sunk by a chance 11-inch shell in her main magazine before the hill was taken. All these vessels, however, had foundered in comparatively shoal water with parts of their decks remaining above the surface, and Viren clung obstinately to the hope that the fortress might still be able to hold out till the arrival of the fleet from Europe, in which case they might possibly be raised again. This view was not shared, however, by Captain Essen of the *Sevastopol*, the most resolute naval officer present, who foresaw the early termination of the siege, and could not endure that his ship should suffer a fate such as that of a trapped animal knocked unresistingly on the head. In this spirit he obtained Viren's permission, while time yet remained, to take her out of the harbour and anchor in the outer roads, where intervening heights on the coast hid her from the observing post on 203-Metre Hill, although her destruction by Japanese destroyers in such a position was almost inevitable sooner or later. This he did on December 9 just after the *Bayan* was sunk, and from what we know of Essen's character, it may perhaps be suspected that if his ship had been in full fighting condition he would have risked the desperate venture of escaping to Vladivostok through the Japanese Fleet. But General Stoessel refused to part with her men and guns in the shore defences, and Essen was forced to do what he could with

only 100 out of his crew of 750 and a third of his full armament. This rendered any dash for freedom impossible.

The appearance of the *Sevastopol* outside was immediately reported by the Japanese lookout ships and caused some excitement in the belief that she intended to break away. Togo spread his fleet at once to intercept her movements, and ordered a destroyer attack for the same night should she still be found at her anchorage. Then began one of the finest episodes of the war, honourable to both navies alike. For seven nights running, amid the gales, snowstorms, and fogs of a bitter winter, the Japanese flotillas did their very utmost to sink the Russian battleship, and for seven nights the worn out handful on board fought them off under the inspiration of their indomitable commander. The credit of this notable defence was shared by a few officers and men belonging to an old gunboat which had also been moved outside and lay close to the battleship. Both were anchored near the shore with their bows pointing seaward, thus offering the minimum target to torpedoes. The net defence of the *Sevastopol* was in place except in the after-part of the ship, where shortage of fittings left it incomplete, and both vessels rigged a common protection to seaward in the shape of a floating obstacle of nets and booms. Very unfavourable weather conditions threw the severest difficulties in the way of the Japanese, but without causing the least hesitation on their part, and night after night they dashed in through the murky darkness of blizzards, obscuring not only the Russian ships but the rocky coast close behind them and the various obstructions in their path. The white glare of the searchlights and the red flashes of the guns were so much diffused by the driving snow that they acted as false lights misleading the attackers, with the consequence that on the first, second, and third nights their efforts all ended in failure. The fourth night, although very dark, was clearer, but all the Japanese torpedoes were stopped by the nets except one, which though checked, yet forced

the net back and exploded close enough to the ship to start serious leaks. On the fifth night another snow-storm set in, but the Japanese were quite undeterred by any severity in the weather. On this occasion one of the destroyers was never heard of again, and all the torpedoes were effectually caught in the nets. Before darkness set in on the sixth Viren sent out the half-dozen Russian destroyers that formed the sole remnant of the Port Arthur flotilla to help Essen. It was a belated measure, but useful for the time. The night was clearer than usual, and twenty-six Japanese boats attacked, firing fifty torpedoes among them, of which about a half ran wide and the remainder were all baffled by the nets. One of the attacking craft was sunk and several others seriously damaged. Heavy snow was falling again on the seventh night with a fresh gale, but Japanese persistence received its reward at last, while for Essen and his little band it was the final effort of their forlorn hope. Pressing their advance to the utmost and favoured by good fortune, the attackers succeeded in sending two torpedoes into the unprotected afterpart of the *Sevastopol*, where both exploded. Two thousand tons of water rushing in submerged her stern till the quarter-deck was level with the surface although her forepart still remained well up, and in the morning the Japanese, observing her condition, realized that she had no chances of escape and desisted from further attacks in the hope that she might yet become a prize. Even then Essen did not despair, but set to work with characteristic energy to cover the holes by use of divers and to pump out the water. In this employment he was still busily engaged, when on Christmas Day he received an intimation direct from General Stoessel, that as negotiations for the surrender of Port Arthur had been opened he was to sink the ship at once. To a man of his unconquerable temperament this order was a tragedy, but no option remained. Moving her out with some difficulty a short distance into deep water, he opened the inlet valves and in fifteen minutes the *Sevastopol* went down. The story of her defence deserves

to live, for it was one of the instances in history in which men with the depressing knowledge of certain failure before them yet refuse to yield. While prospects of victory or relief are present to inspire the mind, the power to fight and endure is not uncommon, but to maintain a resistance without flinching unsustained by any hope of eventual success calls for moral fibre of very exceptional quality. To Essen, however, the supreme satisfaction remained of having inflicted loss on the enemies of his country with the knowledge that his ship was for ever beyond their reach; and whereas the other Russian vessels were eventually raised by the victorious Japanese and added to their navy, the *Sevastopol* never suffered the humiliation of sailing under an alien flag.

Meanwhile events were going badly for the Russians on land. On December 10, the day on which the first Japanese attack on the *Sevastopol* took place, General Kondratenko, the soul of the garrison, was killed. On the 18th the besiegers sprang the first of their land mines, which had been preparing for months, under one of the principal forts. The fort was then taken and the main line of defence penetrated. On December 29 and 31 two more of these forts were blown up in the same way and the ruins passed into Japanese hands. By this time the position was desperate. Stoessel had quarrelled with the other generals and already held parleys with the Japanese against his subordinates' wish; as a result of which he sent out on New Year's Day offering to surrender on January 2, although it was afterwards reported by a court-martial that the resistance might still have been prolonged for a time, for the purpose of keeping the investing troops from being sent to reinforce the Japanese armies in Manchuria. Viren was informed of the decision to capitulate and ordered to complete the destruction of his partially submerged fleet at once, to prevent them from falling into Japanese hands, but received this order much too late for the work to be carried out, and it was never accomplished in consequence. The same evening the terms of surrender were signed in the Japanese camp,

and at dawn on January 2, 1905, the Russian flag was hauled down after flying over Port Arthur for eight years, while the garrison of 39,000 officers and men became prisoners of war, 15,000 being in hospital at the time. Thus the Japanese once again entered into possession of the great naval base after a siege of 154 days, watched with the closest interest by the whole civilized world, and conducted from first to last for the vital purpose of weakening the enemy's maritime position. The effort had cost the victors 60,000 men, and compelled them to undertake their Manchurian campaign with a much smaller force than would have otherwise been available, but it disposed of all the Russian Pacific Fleet and left the enemy with only one fortified seaport in the East. The prestige attaching to such a feat of arms was necessarily immense, and the practical benefits were proportionate. It was not only on the land, however, that their losses had been heavy, for the sea operations directly connected with the siege reduced their precious battle-ships by a third, and involved the destruction of fourteen vessels of the smaller classes, from light cruisers to torpedo-boats, in the constant skirmishing, mine-laying, scouting, and other such work falling to their lot. Seventeen useful steamers had also been sacrificed in attempts to close the entrance, and lastly hundreds of officers and men of the navy had perished in one way or another in the performance of duty in the waters surrounding the fortress.

As soon as the authorities in Tokio received the report that the Russian vessels inside had been sunk—and several days before the actual capture of the base—orders were despatched to Togo to leave a small force only till the end of the siege and send all the rest of the fleet back at once to Japan. His overworked crews thereby at last obtained their long-deferred respite, while the ships underwent a much-needed overhaul and refit. Some watch in the northern channels giving access to the approaches to Vladivostok remained necessary, and a few armed merchant cruisers were sent off south-

ward, to reconnoitre all the unfrequented bays and harbours in the Malay Archipelago and coasts of Indo-China near the expected route of the fleet from the Baltic, and ascertain whether any collection of colliers might be waiting for them, but found none. Except for these minor operations, however, Japanese naval activity was in abeyance for the time, gathering strength to meet the menace approaching steadily from the other side of the world, which filled this period with serious anticipations for officers and men and heavy suspense for the Japanese people. To some extent this anxiety was lightened by the news from the land front, where, before the close of the winter, the Japanese Army had enveloped and defeated a more numerous enemy by superior generalship at the great Battle of Mukden, and driven the Russians from their last stands in the hills of Manchuria. But the brilliant exploits of their splendid soldiers could avail them nothing in the end should the coming Russian ships defeat Togo on the sea.

To follow the course of the war it becomes necessary at this point to turn the attention to regions in another hemisphere altogether, 12,000 miles from the war area. All through the summer and autumn of 1904 the fleet on which rested the last hope of Russia was completing for sea in the tideless waters of the Baltic. On paper it comprised a force with excellent prospects of success in challenging the command of the Eastern waters held by the enemy, but on paper only. Russian naval administration was never of a very high order, and the financial requirements of the Admiralty were always subordinated—rightly and naturally in such a country—to the exigencies of the Ministry of War. One of the mistaken economies of the Russian Government in the years immediately preceding the war had been the omission to enter crews in readiness for the large number of vessels on the stocks, for, as it takes as long to train a seaman to perform his higher technical duties as it does to build the ship in which he is to fight, it becomes a proper maxim in the creation or maintenance of a fleet that when a



keel is laid a proportion at least of the vessel's future crew should be entered and prepared for their work. Thus although a squadron of formidable new battleships was in course of completion and assembly in the Baltic, it was only with the greatest difficulty that they could be manned to meet a grave national emergency; and when at length the actual numbers in men were forthcoming, three-fourths had not only no knowledge of the multifarious special stations in the quarter-bill of a battleship, but had never even been to sea. The command of this sufficiently numerous but otherwise unsuitable force was given to Admiral Roshdestvensky, a strong and energetic officer, who did his best to shape it in the short time at his disposal before starting, and succeeded at least in establishing a discipline under which his crews remained steadfast to the end through the appalling ordeal awaiting them. The material, therefore, must have been good. But beyond that he could effect little, for so anxious was the Russian Government to save the situation before it was too late, that he was despatched on his long voyage on October 16 in the vain hope that he could train his officers and men sufficiently *en route*. Few of them ever set eyes on Russian territory again, and it transpired in the sequel that they had no more chance against the Japanese gun-layers than a raw country lad in a duel to the death with a professional swordsman. But so little was this appreciated at the time, either by the Japanese themselves or the world in general, that their departure on the great enterprise of redeeming the honour of their country was viewed with enthusiasm by the friends of Russia and serious mis-giving by sympathizers with Japan. An early incident, however, tended to modify the feelings of both, and suggest a lack of experience and judgment in seafaring matters among the officers; for on passing through the North Sea, certain of the vessels mistook some British trawlers for Japanese torpedo craft, and fired not only into these but into each other. Some justification for such a mistake might have existed in the great war which

broke out ten years later, for then trawlers were employed on war duties in almost every sea in the world, but in 1904 they had never been used in such a way.

The main problem before the Russian Admiral for the period immediately ahead lay in the question of coaling. No Russian ports were available on the outward voyage, and progress was entirely dependent on the violation of neutral hospitality, or in the use of anchorages outside the three-mile limit of any territorial jurisdiction, or in coaling at sea. He resorted to all three, under arrangements for the solution of this vital and difficult question entitling him to a well-deserved reputation for energy, patience, and resource. In trespassing in neutral ports he merely obeyed superior orders, and the onus of that arrogant proceeding rested with the Russian Government, whose instructions were his vindication. In his selection of anchorages outside territorial waters he displayed a sound judgment. But it was his success in coaling at sea on a large scale that chiefly merits recognition, for up to that time all naval opinion had regarded such an operation as too slow and laborious ever to be applicable except in a very small way. Yet Roshdestvensky took a fleet of forty-five vessels right across the Indian Ocean, through the Straits of Malacca and well into the China Sea, by this means alone, for none of his battleships could cover the distance without replenishing bunkers somehow on the way, and he anchored nowhere between Madagascar and Cochin-China.

On passing out of the Baltic the fleet was separated into its component divisions, which made their way independently to reassemble at Tangier, the first coaling rendezvous. Permission from the Sultan of Morocco to make free use of his harbour was neither asked nor given, and having no power to prevent it he ignored the Russians altogether. When ready to sail thence Roshdestvensky despatched the smaller and older vessels of the different classes through the Mediterranean under Rear-Admiral Felkersham, while he himself followed the long Cape route with the main battle squadron and its

attendant cruisers and auxiliaries, because the draught of the new battleships was too heavy for the passage of the Suez Canal. But this separation was only to be temporary, for, believing it possible that the enemy might be encountered long before reaching Japan, he was desirous of concentrating his whole force for the transit of the Indian Ocean. Felkersham's detached force was therefore ordered to rejoin him at Madagascar two months later—that is to say, at the beginning of January. This being a French possession, it was hoped that the laws of neutrality might not be enforced with inconvenient severity. On leaving Tangier he made his way southward through the Atlantic, and before doubling the Cape coaled at the French ports of Dakar and the Gaboon River, the magnificent harbour of Great Fish Bay on the coast of the Portuguese colony of Angola, and the German anchorage at Angra Pequena. In the French and German roadsteads his proceedings were subjected to protest by the local authorities as a matter of form, but no action was taken in Paris or Berlin. At Great Fish Bay the Portuguese also objected to his presence, but with less right, for the area of that fine sheet of water is so extensive that all the Russians were enabled to anchor outside the three-mile limit in perfect shelter. Passing round the Cape in December and meeting the almost inevitable gale on the Agulhas Bank, he arrived at Madagascar two days before the New Year, where in due course Felkersham rejoined with the balance of the fleet, having travelled via Crete, Suez, and certain unfrequented spots on the East African coast.

All through the voyage the battleships had been lumbered up with extra coal carried on the lower decks and batteries, to such an extent that systematic gun-drill was impossible except in the turrets; but the actual difficulties in regard to progress had been surmounted. At Madagascar these became much more troublesome. Being about to start on the last stage of the long voyage, an early encounter with Togo was considered possible. The colliers accompanying the fleet were all foreign

vessels, mostly German, and the prospect of meeting with the Japanese was so little to the liking of their crews that they flatly refused to proceed farther. As no inducement would change their mind, Roshdestvensky was compelled to undertake the long and laborious process of transferring the coal in their holds to his repair, ammunition, and distilling vessels, and some of his auxiliary merchant cruisers, and to overload his battleships still further. Before doing so, however, he carried out a series of gunnery and tactical exercises to improve the efficiency of the fleet so far as that might be possible in the very brief period available; but the elementary training of officers and men had been so slight that the more advanced practices made little progress, and merely wasted ammunition that could ill be spared. Another discouragement had to be faced in the shape of intelligence gravely affecting his prospects of ultimate success, for before sailing from Madagascar he had learnt of the destruction of the vessels inside Port Arthur, and the capture of the fortress. No hope of receiving a veteran reinforcement on arrival at the theatre of war or the use of an alternative base to Vladivostok therefore remained, and this knowledge, together with the news of the heavy Russian defeat at Mukden, had a most depressing effect on his crews.

But Roshdestvensky was a man of resolute will, and although entertaining little hope of ultimate success, he pressed on with the enterprise entrusted to his charge. Taking his departure from Madagascar with forty-five vessels on March 16, after a stay of two months and a half, and coaling frequently at sea, he accomplished the notable feat of traversing the Indian Ocean and entering Far Eastern waters without touching anywhere, until after a voyage of twenty-eight days he anchored in the fine but unfrequented harbour of Kamranh Bay, in French Cochinchina, on April 14. By this time, however, strong protests had been evoked in Japan at his constant use of French harbours, coupled with the suggestion that this assistance to their enemy came within

the scope of the clause in their treaty with Great Britain providing for British support should Japan have to face a combination. A French cruiser was therefore sent by the authorities at Saigon to request his withdrawal when he had been there for seven days. He left accordingly, but only to anchor four days later at Van Fong Bay, a little farther up the same coast. Not improbably he might have proceeded straight on with his enterprise had it not been for the receipt of orders from Russia to await the arrival of a squadron of reinforcements despatched from the Baltic under Rear-Admiral Nebogatoff long after his own departure, and consisting of the old battleship *Nicholas II.*, with an obsolete cruiser and three coast-defence vessels. Roshdestvensky did not want this reinforcement, because, although they carried useful armaments, the low speed and poor sea-keeping qualities of the coast-defence ships were likely to hamper him in a dash to the northward; but he was forced to receive them. The French meanwhile sent a cruiser again to request his withdrawal, but hearing of her mission before she arrived he took his fleet to sea. Finding the Russians outside, the French vessel returned, and as soon as she was out of sight they re-entered harbour and completed coaling. In this way they gained time till Nebogatoff joined, and then started on the last stage of their fatal journey on May 14. Before sailing the Russian Admiral issued an exhortation to his men to do their utmost in the coming trial, reminding them that they were about to meet enemies who "did not suffer dishonour and died like heroes," and expressing a hope that the Almighty would enable the Russian officers and men to "wash away the bitter shame of their country with their blood." There was a suggestion of Russian fatalism in the wording of this memorandum rather than of high hope, but certainly those to whom it was addressed did their best a few days later to merit its tragically expressed confidence, for although defeated and destroyed they met their deaths with unsurpassable fortitude.

The news of the departure of the Russians on the last

stage of their long voyage was received in Europe with excited attention, where their movements had been followed with keen interest from the first. In Japan the tension was now naturally acute, but mitigated by a sense of relief that the critical hour was near at last, and a firm confidence in the ability of their seamen to avert the downfall of their country.

The immediate object of the fleet now was to reach its final destination at Vladivostok as soon as possible. To do so it was compelled to pass close to the Japanese coasts at some point, but a choice of three routes lay before it. The first of these was the direct course through the Straits of Tsushima between Japan and Korea; the second lay to the eastward of Southern Japan and then round to the west, through the narrow straits of Tsugaru between the main Japanese islands of Nipon and Yezo; and the third to the east and north of the whole Japanese archipelago through the Straits of La Perouse. These last two, however, were much longer than the first, and involved another coaling at sea, necessarily a very risky proceeding in the neighbourhood of the enemy. Moreover, Roshdestvensky anticipated correctly that the straits on the northern passages might be mined. His selection therefore rested on the direct route; nor was it his intention to evade battle if Togo was encountered, realizing as he did that he must try conclusions with the Japanese sooner or later if his mission was to effect any useful purpose for his country. Desiring, nevertheless, to keep Togo in a state of uncertainty as to his movements till the very last moment, he avoided the ordinary track of shipping up the coast of China, and steered north of the Philippine Islands into the unfrequented waters of the Pacific to the eastward of Formosa. Thanks to this well-judged move, he was last sighted at sea by a passing steamer on May 20, and for a whole week thereafter his whereabouts were shrouded in uncertainty while he made his way northwards, so regulating his speed that by the night of the 26th he was nearing the Straits of Tsushima and the almost inevitable meeting with the enemy. Here

it was that after mature deliberation Togo had decided to await him.

By the beginning of April the Japanese fleet had been again astir after completing its refit in readiness for the great ordeal. But the Russians were at that time still far distant, and the immediate activity of their opponents was confined to the secret laying of a line of mines thirty-five miles in length in the outer approaches to Vladivostok by a few vessels under Kamimura. These were intended as a possible last trap for Roshdestvensky, but their only victim was the luckless *Gromoboi*, which, having been repaired after the misfortune mentioned on a previous page, had ventured out on a trial trip only to strike a mine and regain harbour a second time with much difficulty, utterly unfit for any participation in the great struggle nearly due. By the time of Roshdestvensky's passage of the Straits of Malacca the Japanese dispositions had been completed, and every vessel large and small was at her allotted station. Magazines and bunkers were full, bottoms had been cleared in dock to give the best speeds, engines were exactly adjusted, and officers and men recuperated by a spell of rest on shore and once again trained "up to the hour." Nothing had been overlooked, and as the Japanese fleet lay in readiness it might well have been compared to a champion athlete awaiting the arrival of a formidable competitor with confidence, but keenly aware that all his power will be required if he is to hold his own. Togo had recognized the difficulties which Roshdestvensky must encounter if the latter took his fleet east of Japan, and had arrived at the correct conclusion that he would follow the more direct route through the Straits of Tsushima. He began, therefore, by placing his two divisions of armoured ships—twelve vessels altogether—at Masampo, the fine harbour on the south coast of Korea to which previous reference has been made; where they lay in a commanding position facing the Straits, whence they could emerge at short notice to intercept the Russians passing through on receiving warning of their approach. From this

position they could also hope to cut the enemy off from Vladivostok, should he avoid the direct route and make the attempt by passing eastward and northward of Japan where his movements could not fail to be detected either in the Tsugaru or La Perouse channel. To ensure sufficient warning if he came by the direct route, Togo placed a patrol line of cruiser scouts across the western end of the Tsushima Straits, at a distance of about 120 miles from his anchorage at Masampo towards Roshdestvensky's direction of approach. These stretched at intervals of about ten miles from the small group of Goto Islands, close to Japan, to the island of Quelpart, near the coast of Korea, a total distance of about 100 miles. If the Russians were sighted and reported by wireless from any vessel on that line, it would give the battle divisions at Masampo ten or twelve hours' time to cut them off somewhere near Tsushima Island. At the island itself, which lies near the middle of the Straits, were stationed the cruiser squadrons not on the line of lookout, and about one-half of the torpedo-craft flotillas, the other half—consisting of the larger destroyers—being at Masampo with the main force.

These dispositions were undoubtedly excellent, but the six days of ignorance as to the Russian movements after they were last reported at sea on May 20 must have been, nevertheless, a time of grave anxiety for Togo—not on account of the prospect of meeting the Russians, but on account of the possibility of missing them in spite of all his precautions. His situation was similar to that of Nelson off Toulon, in a fever of suspense as to whether the enemy would break out towards Egypt on the east or the Atlantic on the west. So much indeed were the Russians behind their calculated time of arrival if they were coming by the direct route, that the Japanese Admiral was on the point of changing his position when at length they appeared.

A brief general comparison of the two fleets is here appropriate and useful to follow the subsequent course of events. In the armoured vessels on which the main



issue depended they were very evenly matched, the Japanese line consisting of twelve organized in two divisions of six, while the Russian consisted of twelve organized in three divisions of four. To make the relative compositions and organizations clear a diagram is given, which also serves to indicate the overwhelming completeness of the victory and the remarkably precise differentiation of methods by which each Russian division met its end. In heavy guns above 9-inch calibre—the true line-of-battle weapons—the advantage lay very decidedly with the Russians, but there their superiority ended. Their chief weakness—apart from the human element—lay in a defect in the design of their five new battleships, which floated so much below their calculated draught that their armoured belts were submerged and their water-lines rendered vulnerable to light projectiles. This, indeed, appears to have contributed more than anything else to the foundering of three at least. Tactically the Japanese had the advantage of speed, or the victory must have been far less complete; and in torpedo craft their superiority was so marked that the night fighting was all one-sided. They also possessed a preponderance in light cruisers, but this type played no decisive part in the general action, although useful in breaking up the weak Russian rear of auxiliaries and vessels of minor importance. As regards the tactical conditions under which the whole engagement was fought, it must always be borne in mind that the object of pressing towards Vladivostok influenced the Russian manœuvring throughout, whereas the Japanese were under the restraint of no ulterior motive, and did not care in what direction the battle drew the contending forces. Their perfect freedom of tactical movement was only affected by a desire to keep between Roshdestvensky and Vladivostok, which a superior speed rendered easy.

The night of May 26 was dark and wet with driving clouds obscuring the moon as the Russians neared the Straits. Dawn broke dull on the 27th with a strong south-westerly wind and mist, a day of tragic memory

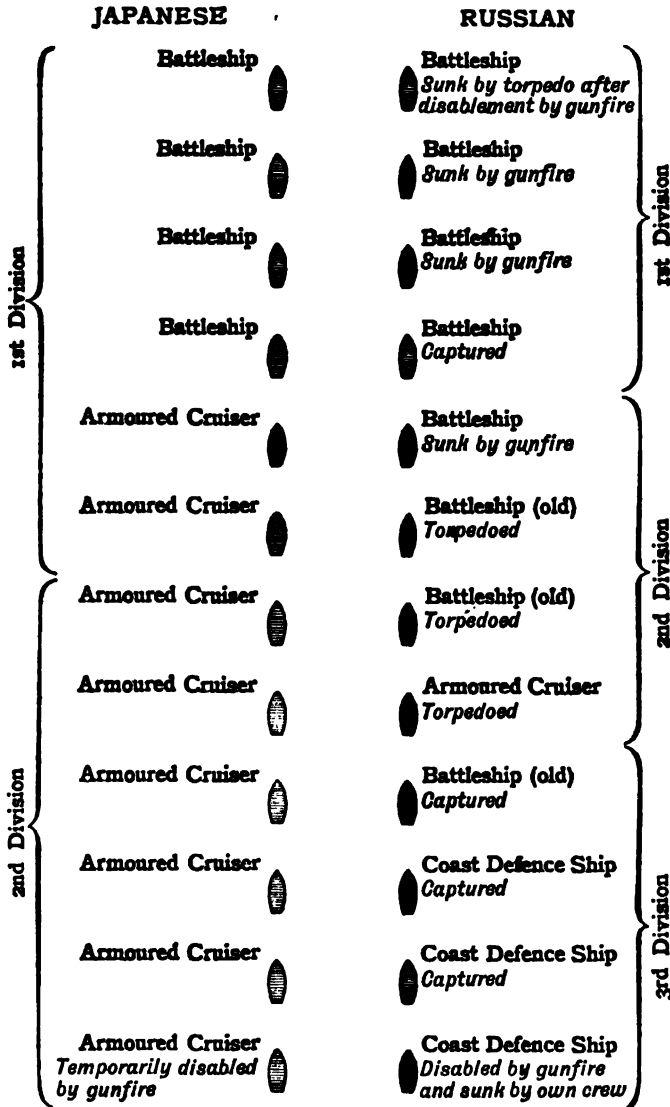


FIG. 8.—DIAGRAM SHOWING ORGANIZATION OF JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN ARMoured SQUADRONS.

for Russia and immortal glory for Japan. Roshdestvensky's crews had been at their quarters all night expecting torpedo craft, but nothing had been sighted. For thousands of them it was the last day of existence, and before another sunrise they were lying in the eternal darkness of water 400 feet deep. About a couple of hours past midnight the Japanese auxiliary cruiser *Shinano Maru* was scouting on the advanced patrol forty miles west of the Goto Islands, and became for ever famous in Japanese history by making out the dim form of a strange vessel in the darkness on a suspicious course, and by following her up, sighted the whole Russian fleet at daylight and flung off the anxiously awaited wireless message, to be taken up and repeated by the long line of lookout ships, the cruiser squadrons at Tsushima Island, and the main armoured divisions at Masampo. Togo's suspense was at an end. An hour later the light cruiser *Idzumi* at the southern extremity of the line of lookouts also sighted the enemy and shadowed them, keeping out of range of their guns but reporting their course, speed, and formation from hour to hour by wireless so that Togo knew exactly what they were doing. As the morning advanced more Japanese appeared, and by seven o'clock the situation was very dramatic. In the centre of the picture was the Russian fleet moving steadily onwards in a compact formation of two columns, with the *Idzumi* watching and following all their movements from the horizon. To the northward, still many hours ahead, Togo was steaming out from Masampo to cross their path with his armoured divisions, the hammer-head of Japanese sea power by day, although a less serious menace than his destroyers in the hours of darkness. From Tsushima Island the cruiser squadrons were hastily weighing and standing to the south-westward to get into touch with the enemy, while from all other directions the widely extended scouting cruisers on patrol were hurrying in on receiving the wireless general recall. In this way the forenoon passed, and before midday the Russians had arrived

abreast of Tsushima. The first messages from the *Idzumi* had reported them in two columns with the battleships to starboard, and as it was Togo's intention to make the battleships his first object of attack, he stood right across to the east of their anticipated line of advance on leaving Masampo, so as to attack on that side. But the enemy altered both course and formation before coming into his sight, hauling up more to the northward and forming single column, which made Togo turn back to the westward at half-past twelve, and in that direction he was steering when three-quarters of an hour later the Russians appeared about six miles to the south. Standing on right across their path, so as to attack from the port side instead of the starboard, he then turned to meet them.

Roshdestvensky had altered formation twice during the forenoon, and his fleet was now in one line with his five best battleships in the van, his older and smaller armoured vessels in the centre, and his light cruisers and auxiliaries in the rear. Togo's plan was to engage the head of the Russian line with his own armoured ships while his light cruisers attacked the tail. Thus it came about that the centre received comparatively little attention till a later stage. When he turned to meet them, as just described, both fleets were in single line steaming fast, and therefore approaching so rapidly that in ten or twelve minutes the leading vessels would have passed each other on opposite courses. But that was never his intention, and with quick insight, just as they were coming into range, he swung his flagship to the north-eastward and led the Japanese line right round in succession to a parallel course with the Russians. It was an audacious manoeuvre to execute close under the bows of a fast advancing enemy, and had the Russians been a highly trained force he would have suffered, but he took the risk of appraising them at their true value. They did endeavour to make him pay the penalty by opening a concentrated fire on each Japanese ship as she turned, but their guns were badly laid, and for all the

effect they produced on their adversary's movements they might just as well have thrown stones. Togo's change of direction was completed without mishap; and served the double purpose of bringing the whole weight of his attack on the Russian van, and of keeping him between Roshdestvensky and Vladivostok.

The terrible superiority of the Japanese gunnery now

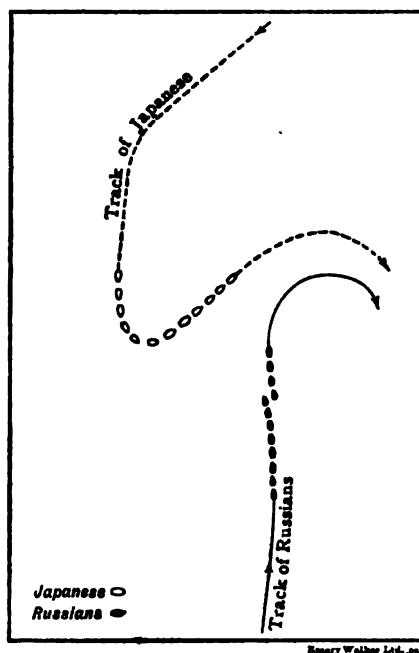


FIG. 9.—DIAGRAM SHOWING APPROACH TACTICS OF JAPANESE ARMOURD DIVISIONS AT BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA. (NOT TO SCALE.)

came into full play. As each ship reached the turning-point and swung into action her starboard guns opened fire, and when the last had steadied her helm on the new course the Japanese broadsides were thundering out in rapid succession all along the line and making three or four hits to the enemy's one. Such a duel could not last long, and in less than fifteen minutes the Russian flagship *Souvaroff* and the battleship *Oslabya*—fifth in

the line—were both on fire and suffering seriously. Finding that he could no longer stand on, Roshdestvensky took the only alternative and sheered off to the eastward, leading the Russian line gradually round. Togo thus scored his first point, for now the enemy was no longer heading for home, but the Japanese Admiral had no intention of relaxing his grip, and followed the Russians accordingly; which his superior speed enabled him to do although on an outer circle. This forced Roshdestvensky to keep on turning till he was heading southward in the opposite direction to Vladivostok altogether. A quarter of an hour later the Russian Commander-in-Chief was struck down unconscious with a fractured skull, and the command devolved upon Nebogatoff, far to the rear in the third division; Felkersham, the original second in command, having died at sea two days before the battle. Very soon afterwards the *Souvaroff* received a shell in the steering-gear and hauled out of the line unmanageable, and shortly after that again the *Ostyabya*, shattered by the crushing fire of the Japanese second division, was sunk fighting to the last and taking 500 of her crew with her. Togo had scored a second and very important point by forcing a change of command on his adversaries in the height of action during a critical bit of manoeuvring, and disabling the vessel whose officers alone knew the former Chief's intentions at the moment and could have given a lead. In his despatches he stated that the battle was practically won in the initial stage, which certainly seems to have been the case.

It was now nearly three o'clock and the action had lasted for an hour. From that time onward it became one of the most confusing and complicated engagements ever fought on the sea at continuous full speed, in which the movements were so intricate that to attempt to follow them in detail in a general account is merely tedious. A full description of the events of the four hours intervening before nightfall can indeed never be given, for few of the Russians participating therein survived, and so many of their ships caught fire that the

surface of the water was covered with a pall of smoke to leeward, spreading for miles, which, in conjunction with the misty weather, occasionally made it impossible for their antagonists to discern their movements at all. It may suffice to say, therefore, that when the Russian flagship fell out, the lead was taken by her next astern, the battleship *Alexander III.*; and the Russian fleet, in a ragged line, turned and twisted to almost every point of the compass in desperate endeavours to shake off Togo's tenacious pursuit, while the Japanese followed every movement as they discerned it and sooner or later frustrated its intention. Twice the contending forces lost touch in smoke and haze for a full half-hour and firing ceased, only to burst out again with the utmost fury directly the misty outlines of the enemy's vessels reappeared. At other times disabled ships were suddenly encountered, including the *Souwaroff*, and smothered in an *inferno* of Japanese shells; for the turnings and doublings of the Russians often took them backwards and forwards through the same area. For the greater part of this period the two Japanese armoured divisions moved independently, the first under Togo himself and the second under Kamimura, and hunted their opponents through all this welter of obscurity and destruction from one to the other, but kept their own order to perfection. Twice the Russians were driven south, twice east, and once west, but never ceased making strenuous efforts to turn north towards Vladivostok—only one day's steaming distant—and always their enemies headed them off. The Japanese, although engaging every vessel that might be visible, endeavoured as far as possible to concentrate their fire on the powerful Russian battleships in the van; and thus, after the *Souwaroff* and *Oshyabya* were disposed of, the *Alexander III.* and *Borodino* came in for special attention. Towards evening the *Alexander* was a mass of flames and leaking all along the water-line. Through enormous holes in her sides spectators in other ships could see an interior like a red-hot furnace. Yet a handful of heroes fought on in the fore-turret with the only

serviceable guns left, till she took a plunge at last and went to the bottom with 840 officers and men, of whom only 4 were saved. For a brief period the *Borodino* succeeded to the lead, and then a Japanese shell arrived in one of her magazines and blew her up with another 840 souls, of whom only 1 survived. The next Russian loss was the *Souvaroff*, which occurred at some distance from the main fighting at the time. After disablement this vessel drifted helplessly for hours while the tide of battle sometimes drew near and sometimes receded; and as her colours remained flying, whenever a Japanese division dashed by every vessel gave her a passing broadside, till she became a riddled wreck with all her thirty odd guns rendered unserviceable except one small 12-pounder. The unconscious Commander-in-Chief had been removed with great difficulty to an attendant Russian destroyer during a lull, but the other officers and men remained and must have suffered appallingly before the end, although details on that point can never be known. Sighting her helpless condition late in the day, some Japanese cruisers and destroyers moving about in a special lookout for disabled ships approached and summoned her to surrender, but were answered by fire from her one serviceable gun, and compelled in consequence to give her the *coup de grâce*. Two torpedoes striking amidships sunk her in a few minutes with 900 ranks and ratings, and the last thing to disappear was the Russian ensign on the stump of a mast.

Thus before nightfall four of the five most powerful ships in the Russian fleet were at the bottom of the Straits of Tsushima, and of this class only the *Orel* remained. Her comparative immunity was due to chance. Bad handling in forming single line from two columns just before the battle began had caused a slight overlap between the first and second divisions, and thus the *Orel*, instead of being ahead of the *Oslabya*, had been abreast of her on the far side from the enemy when the Japanese first attacked. This sheltered her during the fierce fighting of the initial stage, in which the latter



vessel was sunk, and as the *Orel* never succeeded to the lead she escaped the concentrated weight of fire which fell on her sister ships later in the day. The second-rate vessels in the centre of the line had also escaped actual destruction so far, although more or less severely injured, for in the obscurity of the afternoon's conflict the Japanese had fired on any ships in sight at the time when the leaders were not visible. When darkness came down on the scene the Russian remnant were struggling on under Nebogatoff in the old battleship *Nicholas II.*, and Togo, finding good practice no longer possible in the failing light, drew out of action, and disappeared from the enemy to the north-eastward in the direction of Vladivostok. Thus for the second time in this war the big ship with the gun retired from the stage in favour of the little ship with the torpedo till the sun should appear again. Togo's move had the double object of leaving a clear field for his torpedo craft during the night, and getting ahead of Nebogatoff to renew the battle if necessary next day. It also gave the tired Japanese armoured divisions a chance to lick their wounds; in other words, to repair damage, attend to casualties, ease the machinery, and pass a quiet night.

But for the Russians there was to be no such respite. When the blows of the Japanese armoured ships ceased to fall Nebogatoff did indeed get a chance at last to shape course for Vladivostok, but only to suffer another form of persecution. Four of the eight remaining Russian armoured vessels were in no condition for fast steaming, and soon after dark the remnant of the Russian fleet began to break up. These four gradually dropped astern, and the surviving light cruisers and auxiliaries of the original Russian rear—which had become separated from the main force during the day under the attack of the Japanese light cruisers—lost touch at nightfall altogether, and steamed away under cover of darkness to seek refuge in neutral ports. The wind had gone down towards evening, leaving favourable weather conditions for even the smaller torpedo craft, of which they

took full advantage. Before sunset fifty-eight Japanese destroyers and torpedo-boats were steaming parallel to the Russians, safely out of range, but only waiting for darkness to begin their attacks, and making it obvious to the weary and dispirited enemy that a desperate night's work still lay before them. Nebogatoff's own flagship, with the *Orel*, and the coast-defence vessels *Aprazin* and *Senyavin*, drew away from their more seriously damaged consorts, and although attacked during the course of the night by destroyers that had gone ahead to cut them off, suffered no loss, partly on account of their speed and partly because they were showing no lights. Their end, therefore, was postponed till next morning, when it took the form of surrender.

The vessels that could not keep up, however, were doomed to meet their fate by the torpedo. As they lagged and separated the flotillas closed in and began by attacking the armoured cruiser *Nakhimoff*, which in spite of a fine defence was torpedoed and left in a completely helpless and semi-submerged condition; but remained afloat till the morning, and was then sunk by her own men to avoid being taken a prize by some approaching Japanese cruisers, although they themselves were picked up. The Japanese threatened to leave them to their fate if they persisted in sinking their vessel—and with perfect justice—but humanity prevailed over an insistence on belligerent rights and their threat was not executed. Herein it must be admitted that the Japanese displayed more forbearance than many Europeans would have done. After dealing with the *Nakhimoff* the destroyers continued their sweep and found the *Navarin*, the most powerful of the older battleships, which they eventually sank after a gallant resistance at midnight with 650 officers and men. Two hours later they discovered the *Sissoi Veliki*, and she also was torpedoed, but did not sink till daylight, after two Japanese cruisers had tried to take her in tow as a prize. Most of her crew were, however, rescued. The fourth of the lagging cripples was the *Ushakoff*, which escaped

discovery in the darkness only to meet her fate later. Thus the tide of Japanese success flowed unchecked by night as by day, and did not cease when day appeared once more. But the night attacks cost them the loss of three torpedo-boats and the temporary disablement of seven more, with heavy casualties to their crews.

When Togo ceased firing with his main force soon after sunset, he called off all the scattered cruiser divisions at the same time by wireless signal, so as to leave no vessel of the larger classes to interfere with the torpedo craft, and ordered a general rendezvous next morning at Matsushima Island, lying about 200 miles to the northward almost on the direct route to Vladivostok. Thence he intended to spread an intercepting line to catch any surviving Russian vessels still trying to push on, and the general movement towards the rendezvous from the neighbourhood of the daylight action filled the intervening area during the night with detached squadrons and ships from the light-cruiser divisions and destroyer flotillas making their way north over wide intervals. This northward stream went on all night and far into the next day, and Nebogatoff steered right into the trap prepared for him with the four ships remaining in his company. In shaping course straight for his port of refuge instead of making a wide *détour* under cover of darkness he committed a fatal strategic error, for he merely followed in Togo's wake in the most convenient way to facilitate the operations of the Japanese Admiral, as he might have foreseen. For the first hour of daylight on the following morning he remained undiscovered by the enemy, but at five o'clock one of the light-cruiser division making for the general rendezvous hove in sight to the westward and reported his position at once to the main fleet about fifty miles ahead. This sealed his fate, and within three hours the Japanese armoured divisions appeared on the horizon right ahead in overwhelming force standing straight towards him. Soon afterwards the rapidly approaching battleships opened fire, whereupon the Russians turned away, and striking their colours

stopped engines and awaited their captors. Ceasing fire at once, the Japanese closed round, and spent several hours in the somewhat lengthy process of putting prize crews on board and taking charge, which was rendered difficult by the scarcity of undamaged boats left available after the fight of the day before. In this operation they were still employed in the afternoon when the last of the Russian armoured ships, the *Ushakoff*, appeared in the distance approaching from the southward. This vessel had suffered a good deal in the battle on the previous day, but escaped attack by night as already observed, and chanced to be so far in rear of the general Japanese movement to the northward that she neither saw nor was seen by any enemy vessel till she came in view of the main fleet, after her officers had congratulated themselves on their supposed safety. The Japanese summoned her to surrender by signal, but her captain refused and tried to escape. Two Japanese armoured cruisers then went after her like unleashed greyhounds, and a hot fight ended her career, in which her captain, finding escape or resistance impossible, gave orders to open the valves to let her sink, going down with her himself, although most of her crew were saved. Thus within a little more than thirty-six hours from the moment when a small group of officers on the bridge of the *Shinano Maru* had first discerned the outlines of the Russian fleet through the drizzle of a stormy dawn not a single armoured ship in that fleet remained to fight for her country, and eight of the twelve were no longer above the surface of the ocean.

Nor were these the only events of importance during the aftermath of the great battle. Seven of the eight Russian destroyers which survived endeavoured to make for Vladivostok during the night, but all were sighted and chased by the Japanese torpedo craft next day, and only two escaped. Four were sunk in the attempt, and one, on being nearly caught up by her pursuers towards evening, stopped her engines and struck her colours without offering any resistance; much to their surprise.

On approaching to take possession they discovered the reason. Several officers of higher ranks than are usually seen in destroyers were observed on deck round a recumbent figure, and on sending a boat on board, the Japanese made the sensational discovery that they had captured the Russian Commander-in-Chief, crippled in body and broken in mind. The destroyer that had originally removed him from his disabled flagship had sustained such damage later that he was transferred to another, which was making her utmost efforts to get away, but when escape was no longer possible surrendered to save his life. As regards the fate of the eight Russian light cruisers engaged during the battle in protecting the auxiliaries in rear of the main fleet from the enemy's same class of vessel, these had become so much scattered before evening that only three remained in line under the Russian cruiser Admiral Enquist, who made many efforts after dark to press on towards Vladivostok, but was so repeatedly though unsuccessfully attacked by torpedo flotillas that he lost all hope of getting there, and turned southward towards the Philippines, where his three ships were interned by the United States authorities on their arrival at Manila a few days later. Another light cruiser was torpedoed and disabled, being sunk by her own crew next morning to avoid capture. The remaining four evaded night attack, but two were sighted and engaged by the Japanese cruisers next day, and finding escape impossible were also sunk by their own men after offering a stubborn defence for a long time. The other two escaped the Japanese attention altogether by virtue of very high speed, but one ran ashore in a dense fog next morning and was wrecked. Seven of the eight were therefore eliminated in one way or the other, and only a solitary survivor reached the destination for which all Roshdestvensky's fleet had originally been steering forty-eight hours before. This vessel conveyed the terrible news to the Russian Government.

This great battle stands unique in the whole history of war on land or sea in one respect. Of the Russian

officers and men, 4,830 lost their lives, but of the Japanese only 110. Thus the proportion of killed on the two sides was 44 to 1, a figure which has never been approached in the slightest degree in any of the decisive encounters of the whole world where the fight opened with no overwhelming advantage in numbers, position, or weapons on either side. In regard to losses in ships no great naval victory has ever led to a more complete annihilation of the enemy in so short a time unless we go back to very ancient history. Only two French ships of the line escaped at the Battle of the Nile, which Mahan, in writing before the Russo-Japanese conflict, had described as the "most complete of naval victories"; but at Tsushima every vessel in the main Russian line without exception was either destroyed or captured, while of the lighter craft every cruiser but one was lost to her country either permanently or till the end of the war, and every destroyer except two. The auxiliaries suffered in the same degree. And an analysis of the methods whereby the three armoured divisions forming the main Russian force met their ends respectively is extremely illustrative of the systematic completeness of the Japanese work. Togo had planned to begin to fight by day in the Straits, and to follow this up all night by destroyer attacks while his capital ships went on ahead under cover of darkness towards Vladivostok for a resumption of the battle next day; and thanks to an excellent organization and a complete understanding with his divisional flag officers, all this was carried out just as he intended. It may be admitted that Roshdestvensky and Nebogatoff both played into his hands, the first by passing through the Straits by day owing to apprehension of torpedo craft; and the second by adhering to the direct Vladivostok route on the night of the 27th. But that should not lessen the admiration evoked by the remarkable success of the whole scheme and the precise adherence to programme in its execution. The Russian armoured ships were organized in three divisions, forming, however, only one line, as already observed, with the best ships

in the van, the second-rates in the centre, and the third in the rear. All ships in the van division were destroyed by gunfire on the first day except the *Orel*—for the *Souvaroff* was practically disposed of before being actually sunk by torpedo; all in the centre division were sunk by torpedo during the night except the *Oslabya*—already sunk by gunfire; and all in the rear division were captured or sunk on the second day in trying to reach Vladivostok. The *Orel* escaped destruction with her consorts of the van division on the first day for reasons already given, but fell a prize on the morrow.

The immediate results of the victory were most far-reaching. In Russia the news caused the deepest depression, and all hopes of ultimately winning the war vanished. On land the situation had arrived at something in the nature of a deadlock, promising no decisive outcome either way in spite of the Russian reverse at Mukden, for the Japanese had reached the limit of their capacity in men and money, and could not hope to drive the enemy back any farther. The Russians, on the other hand, although far from the end of their resources in troops, were unable to send any more to the war, because their one line of railway could only with the utmost difficulty feed those already at the front. Thus although strong enough to hold their ground they were unable to advance. As neither side could take the offensive on land, nothing but a decisive defeat of the Japanese on the sea could alter the situation, and this the Russians had signally failed to achieve. The conditions after Tsushima, therefore, were singularly favourable for foreign mediation, and President Roosevelt took the opportunity to offer his services. At his invitation, after some preliminary discussions in June, a conference of representatives assembled in the United States which arrived at an agreement signed on September 5, 1905, bringing the war to an end. By the terms of peace Russia expressly recognized that Japanese interests were permanent in Korea from the military, political, and economic standpoints, which had been the special contention of the

victors from the first. The lease of the Liao-tung peninsula with Port Arthur obtained by Russia from the Chinese was also transferred to Japan; together with the southern half of the island of Saghalin which the Japanese had occupied in July. No indemnity was paid, but the Russian ships lying half submerged in Port Arthur were raised and added to the Japanese fleet. Some were returned to Russia in 1915 when Russians and Japanese were both fighting against Germany. Lastly, the Russian evacuation of Manchuria, forced by defeat in the field, was rendered permanent. Japan had therefore attained all the objects for which she entered the war.

In its maritime aspects the great trial of strength thus brought to a conclusion presented several features investing it with an interest peculiarly its own. In the first place, no war of importance in which the territories of the belligerents were entirely separated by the sea, and on which both were strong, was ever confined in all its branches of naval activity to so limited an area in the actual fighting. In the British struggles with France, Holland, and Spain from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, actions on a large or small scale were fought in most of the seas of the globe, although the central and decisive events occurred near the coasts of Europe. But the strife between the ships of Russia and Japan was intensely localized, and neither Navy established a world-wide command of the sea over the other; for it was just as dangerous for a Japanese steamer to appear in European waters to the very end as it was for a Russian to be seen east of Singapore. Neither antagonist owned a sufficient volume of sea-borne trade to be worth special attention; and except for the raids of the Vladivostok cruisers, neither resorted to a *guerre de course* in consequence. Nor did the flag of either fly over distant and isolated possessions inviting attack and giving rise to excentric operations, such as those waged simultaneously between Rodney and De Grasse in the West Indies, and Suffren and Hughes in the Bay of Bengal. From first to last the whole efforts of the contending



admirals were directed towards measures for destroying each other's fleets in order to dominate the small area of water lying between Japan and the Asiatic Continent.

The second point which distinguished the war from all others waged between civilized States lay in the fact, of which mention has already been made, that the numerically inferior Navy had no option but to act on the offensive throughout, even though it possessed no means of replacing lost vessels. That the Japanese should have faced the test involved in such conditions rather than submit to interference in regions where their national honour and interests were at stake, suffices in itself to stamp them as a remarkable people even if they had never done anything else. And their triumphant emergence from this severest of trials proves their possession of a natural aptitude for scientific warfare of the highest order. Apart from the general strategy, which was simple, the tactical and technical features of the operations are specially interesting, because this was the first war of importance waged after the invention of the Whitehead torpedo, and the last before the invention of the submarine. For centuries before its outbreak the gun alone had counted as the only naval weapon of any real importance. Hence arose the "capital ship," using that term in its generally accepted sense as denoting the vessel in which the maximum tonnage enables the greatest number of guns of heavy calibre to be carried, whether she was the three-decker of the wooden era, or the steel successor of a later period with a 12-inch armament and a proportionate thickness of protective plating against the gunfire of an enemy. But in the latter half of the nineteenth century certain forms of under-water attack were invented, to meet which the gun had little power to act effectively, and opposed to these the capital ship was unable to take care of herself. In the Napoleonic wars the ship-of-the-line feared nothing afloat by day or night, and even as late as 1855 she lay close off a first-class hostile base such as Sevastopol with perfect impunity. But fifty years later a time had come when she

feared the attack of destroyers very much indeed after dark, and left the latter in virtual command of the sea near their base—at least, during the night. Togo never ventured in the vicinity of Port Arthur with his battle-squadron when the sun was below the horizon. And even in the daytime the capital ship was not always safe, for the only two lost by Japan in the whole war were sunk as a result of the secret operations of a small mine-layer costing not a tenth part of the value of either. Thus, when the Russo-Japanese War broke out the undisputed supremacy of the gun was seriously challenged for the first time by the torpedo and the mine, and with no small degree of success.

Ten years later the introduction of the submarine made the sea as unsafe for the capital ship by day as the surface torpedo craft had already made it by night. Having ceased to be able to take care of herself in war, she never now leaves her base unless protected by a cloud of destroyers, and never approaches an enemy's harbour except at her peril. Thus the Russo-Japanese War afforded a practical demonstration of the first step in the degradation of the type of vessel representing the extreme embodiment of the power of the gun, coming as it did at the intermediate stage between the long era when she reigned without a rival on the sea, and her situation at the present day, when her movements are always conditioned and influenced by dangers which her own powers can do little to avert, although these forms of menace are as yet in the infancy of their development. For these reasons this great conflict must always retain a special historical interest of its own as the only war of consequence fought under such conditions.

## CONCLUSION

WITH the termination of hostilities all in their favour the Japanese had emerged from a form of ordeal usually recognized as entitling a people to a place among the Great Powers of the world—that is to say, a successful struggle to a finish with one of these Powers themselves. The events of the years 1904 and 1905 had falsified the predictions of the numerous prophets—naval, military, and political—who foretold that Russia would throw Japan in the dust, should the latter ever be rash enough to provoke a trial of arms with an adversary held by Europe in a respect amounting to awe. And as this result was quite unexpected by the Governments of other countries, the diplomats of the world had to adjust their policy somewhat extensively to meet the new conditions. Thus in Berlin, where Russia had been supported in her anti-Japanese policy as long as Japan was not strong enough to oppose it, a visiting Japanese prince was ostentatiously welcomed when the news of Tsushima was received. In Great Britain alone among the first-class Powers of Europe no reversal of attitude was required, and the foresight of the British Foreign Office four years previously in entering into alliance with Japan while yet but a minor Power received its due. Nor did the British Cabinet wait till the war was at an end to cement and emphasize this policy of friendship, for in 1905, while hostilities were still in progress, the original Alliance was revised and extended by mutual agreement. The main point of difference between the old and new treaties lay in the second article of the latter, which provided that if either of the contracting parties was involved in war in defence of its territorial rights or special interests in Eastern Asia the other would come

to its assistance, although this arrangement was not to take effect until the war then actually running its course had terminated. By the first Alliance neither party had been obliged to offer active assistance to the other unless the other was attacked by two or more enemies, and thus Japan had to fight Russia unsupported, although in the knowledge that Russia also could look for no allies. But by the second Alliance each was pledged to render help if the other was attacked at all. This ensured to Japan that any Power except Russia thereafter intending to threaten her position must first get past the British Fleet; and although Russia did not have to cross the sea to menace Japanese interests, she could only adopt an aggressive attitude in the future with the knowledge that Japan would fight a second time under no repetition of her former anxiety in regard to her lines of communication.

To Great Britain the second Alliance ensured the continued effective protection of her commercial interests in the Far East, and obtained the support of the greatest military Power in the Eastern Hemisphere for her situation in India. Thus when the new terms were made public in August, 1905, the whole world knew that no aggressive policy would be possible in Eastern Asia without encountering the active opposition of two maritime Powers, one of which possessed the largest fleet in existence, and the other the most experienced in all that related to modern warfare on the sea. On this substantial foundation the external peace of that portion of the globe has rested securely ever since. Ambitious schemes of spoliation at the expense of China came perforce to an end, and the long-existing scramble for territorial and commercial concessions ceased at the same time, never to be revived to this day in spite of the constant weakness of that country from internal discord.

In 1910, fifteen years after the release of Korea from the hampering domination of Peking by the results of the Chino-Japanese War, Japan proclaimed an annexation of that incurably retrograde land. During the

interval the Koreans had proved themselves to be quite incapable of setting up any stable form of government of their own. Chaos reigned on all sides, security for life and property was non-existent, and economic conditions had gone from bad to worse. No advice from outside sources received attention, and no prospects of any improvement in the situation appeared. All this was most inimical to the interests of Japan, which Great Britain and Russia had expressly recognized as politically, militarily, and economically "paramount" in Korea. Japan, in fact, found herself in circumstances similar to those of other progressive and civilized countries, whose position has suffered by the existence of some hopelessly inefficient rule in a minor State where their subjects have interests. In such cases the time usually arises sooner or later when intervention becomes unavoidable, and an end has to be made of an impossible situation by turning out the incompetents and substituting just and efficient administrators, as Great Britain did in Egypt in 1882, and the United States in Cuba in 1898. After fifteen years of abstention from interference in which the Koreans were given every chance to mend their ways, Japan did the same, and as no alternative form of government was possible in Korea except her own, that land was added to the dominions under the Japanese Crown. Action of this kind by a stronger Power towards a weaker invariably raises protests in some irresponsible quarter, as Great Britain found in regard to Egypt and the United States in the Spanish colonies, and Japan has not escaped the usual criticism levelled by unofficial sympathizers in all such cases. But no protest was raised by any civilized Government, all of which had long foreseen the step as inevitable, and recognized that had they been in the position of the Japanese authorities themselves the voices of their own subjects would sooner or later have forced them to take similar measures. The change in Korea was very soon apparent. Life and property became secure under a strong administration, commerce and finances regained a stable and prosperous condition,

agriculture revived, and a civilized rule replaced a barbarous and brutal anarchy.

In 1911 the Japanese Alliance with Great Britain was revised for a second time to bring it up to date in regard to the then existing international situation, and to introduce a clause providing that if either of the contracting parties should conclude a general treaty of arbitration with some third Power, nothing in the terms of the Alliance should compel it to go to war with that third Power in support of its ally. This provision, however, has never yet assumed proportions of much consequence, since no such general treaty of arbitration has been concluded by either contracting party to the Alliance as yet. But this second revision of the standing agreement with Great Britain was the latest step taken by Japan towards the consolidation of her international position, especially on the sea, and with its mention the purely historical treatment of our subject comes to an end.

Before concluding, it may perhaps be permissible to make some reference to the outlook for the future. Japan stands now wellnigh impregnable to direct attack, as a result of great natural advantages of position combined with success in war and wisdom in diplomacy. Surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, which has once again become her great guarantee of safety because she has learnt how to use it as a line of defence; separated by 10,000 miles of water from Europe and nearly 5,000 from America; and having no great military neighbour near at hand since the break-up of the Russian Empire, her situation is such that no Power in the world can seriously threaten her in her own regions in the near future at least. For any attack on Japan as matters now stand the enemy must be in possession of a fleet about three times as powerful as that of the defence, because no other country has a fully-equipped modern naval base and arsenal in the Eastern Pacific capable of docking two or three of the largest battleships simultaneously; or of removing guns 100 tons in weight; or

of manufacturing wholesale supplies of heavy-calibre ammunition; or, lastly, of storing the millions of tons of oil-fuel required by a twentieth-century fleet in war. Without such a base in easy reach a large proportion of the attacking fleet—probably a third—must constantly be at some distance from the theatre of operations; while the force actually on the spot must always be twice as strong as the defence if any effective watch or blockade is to be possible. No Power exists at present in a position to undertake such a task. The one potentially vulnerable section in the Japanese strategic position is her Korean land frontier, which, like the British frontier in India, requires defence by an army dependant on sea communications and cannot be held by sea-power alone. But until that joint in her harness is threatened by a first-class military Power firmly established in Asia, and independent of the sea for keeping its army in the field—such as Russia was in 1904—its security cannot be seriously disturbed.

As matters stand at present, therefore, Japan is practically safe against aggression while she maintains an efficient fleet. And although she will certainly offer a determined opposition to any policy injurious to her vital interests, her own policy is not based in aggressive intentions towards others; for even if the Japanese were inclined to indulge in dreams of conquest such as inflamed the German mind prior to 1914, they are quite sane enough to realize the madness of attempting to attack any civilized State in Europe or America. For these reasons peace may be regarded as well established and likely to endure between Japan and all civilized Powers, for no war can take place if neither side assumes the offensive. It is true that a certain class of alarmists, with little knowledge of naval affairs but a rich endowment of nervous imagination, persist in regarding a conflict between Japan and the United States as one of the probabilities of the not very remote future. But surely such a view is not very complimentary to the intelligence and self-control of two great peoples. Theodore Roosevelt

never agreed with it, and no man was ever in a better position to judge or more ambitious for the good of his own country. Causes of friction may undoubtedly exist, but none lying beyond hope of settlement if reasonable forbearance is exercised on both sides. A section of Japanese public opinion is aggrieved because their countrymen receive different treatment as regards residence in the United States to Europeans, and claim an equality on the grounds that Japan is a member of the League of Nations. At first sight this resentment may seem natural, but they should study history, which will teach them that the roots of this matter lie far deeper than in the nicely balanced theories of international lawyers. Racial differences are inborn and constitute a factor in human affairs that cannot be abolished by speech-making round a conference table at Geneva. To ignore their existence is to depart from practical politics in settling international relations. It is not a question of the superiority or inferiority of this people or that, but simply a question of fundamental difference of mentality and social instincts. The Japanese need fear comparison with no race in the world as a nation of virile, courageous, and high-minded men, exercising a greater influence on human progress in their own quarter of the globe than anyone else. In their patience, industry, and indifference to enervating material comfort, their standards are above those of most other lands. But four-fifths of the population of the United States are of pure European extraction, and history makes it abundantly clear that Europeans and Asiatics are so constituted that they can never inhabit the same country in peace unless one or other occupies the position of an inferior race. Even when Europeans of different racial origin, such as Teutons and Slavs, are living in the same area in large numbers, the political conditions are nearly always unstable. These plain lessons should make it clear to anyone that a wholesale Japanese emigration to the United States would be as bad for Japan as for America, involving the Governments of both countries in constant



anxiety, unless the emigrants frankly accepted a subject position such as that of the Greeks and Armenians under Turkish rule, or the negroes of the Southern States of the Union—which Japanese self-respect would never allow. The same applies to Australia. The vast emptiness of that portion of the British Empire is one of the most regrettable and disappointing features of our time, but British enterprise hoisted the Union Jack in southern latitudes at a period when the Japanese were declining to move a step beyond their own shores, and the small population which does inhabit Australia's southern fringe are Europeans, who could not exist in harmony in the same country with any people of non-European origin.

But this racial exclusiveness must be recognized as holding good in both directions if the world is to remain at peace. Political practices of the Monroe doctrine type, although based entirely on self-interest, cannot without a violation of the most elementary principles of morality and justice refuse to other countries the advantages which they insist on for their own. If Europe, America, and Australia are all reserved for the interests of populations of European origin, then the interests of Japan must in common equity be allowed to prevail in Eastern Asia, which is their own quarter of the earth's surface. If the Japanese were a hopelessly retrograde and incapable people, obstructing the spread of civilization, it might be otherwise, but they are not. Japan will doubtless exercise in the course of time a beneficial influence on the coasts of the North-West Pacific, comparable to that exercised by Great Britain in India and France in North Africa, and she has every reason to claim that her political, military, and economic interests, which have already been expressly recognized by Great Britain and Russia as paramount in Korea, should be recognized by all States as paramount throughout the Far East. Forbearance must be exercised in that direction if peace is to be maintained; and should commercial temptations prompt any other country to thwart Japanese aspirations in areas where the Japanese are more vitally

concerned than anyone else, the sympathy of every right-minded man should lie with Japan. Under such provocation the Japanese could not be expected to submit without forcible protest, nor would they be deserving of respect if they did. And the aggressor will be faced with a most formidable task if he persists in enforcing his policy. Apart from the great distances separating Japan from other continents—which exercise a potent influence in keeping the peace in themselves—the natural geography of the North-West Pacific confers important strategic advantages on Japanese defensive requirements. The chain of islands forming the Empire covers the sea approaches to Eastern Asia from Vladivostok to Shanghai in a manner somewhat corresponding to that in which Great Britain covers the sea approaches to North-Western Europe, and no military or naval expedition can get past this natural barrier if Japan offers resistance, unless with great risk and difficulty. It was this advantage of position that enabled Togo to make fairly certain of intercepting the Russian fleet before it reached its destination.

These considerations would seem to point inevitably to the conclusion that the North Pacific is not likely to carry the rumble of heavy gunfire in our time if self-control and reasoned sense prevail among the leading Powers of the world. Moderation, restraint, and political sagacity enabled the elder statesmen of Japan to lead their country in the early steps of its progress from a position of no importance to a place in the front rank. It may sincerely be hoped that their successors in the years to come will remember that excellent example. And if the responsible directors of foreign policy in any other land are tempted to interfere unreasonably with Japanese predominance in Eastern Asia, they will do well to recall the fact that it was the uncompromising insistence of St. Petersburg on the pursuit of a course detrimental to Japanese interests in those regions that ended in sweeping the Russian flag from the Eastern seas and Manchuria, and pulling it down from the ramparts of

Port Arthur, although not until Japan had exhausted every effort of diplomacy in trying to meet Russia half-way. If the day should come, nevertheless, when diplomacy fails again to settle some question in which Japan considers herself vitally concerned, then the influence of the sea on her history will once more play an all-important part. At present Japanese naval policy relies on the very largest form of battleship as the instrument of sea-power, but it is at least an open question as to whether the greater part of the money thus spent would not be better invested in the form of submarines, for Japanese waters are particularly well suited to the operations of that type of vessel on account of their great depth, which precludes the possibility of submarines being "mined in" as they were in the North Sea. With a couple of hundred of these craft as a defence no foreign battle-squadron would ever be likely to approach her coasts or attempt to enter the Yellow Sea. But whether the battleship or the submarine is the implement in use, it is on the men who handle it that everything depends in the end, and in the human element of security the Japanese are well provided. Nobody is likely to controvert the warning issued by the Russian Commander-in-Chief to his men before sailing to meet them in battle, that "the loyalty of the Japanese to their throne and country is unbounded. They do not suffer dishonour and they die like heroes."

Japan lies in the Pacific Ocean, which earned its name from its comparative freedom from the war of the elements, and if reason prevails in politics may earn it in a double sense by its freedom from the wars of mankind. But if civilization fails once again to keep men from wholesale massacres of each other, then that great expanse of blue water may become the highway to one of the most sanguinary racial conflicts that ever convulsed the world, from which the victor is likely to emerge in little better condition than the vanquished to whichever side the fortune of war may ultimately incline.

## APPENDIX I

IN the lists given in the appendices only the vessels which were competent to undertake war duties on the high seas appear. No local defence flotillas or river gunboats are included, as none of these played any appreciable part in the main events of the wars of Japan. In compiling these lists the elaborate and diffuse classification of old lists has been reduced and simplified, in order to facilitate an understanding of the actual war values of the contending fleets by readers who are not conversant with the terms formerly applied to distinguish many older types of vessels. Designations which are no longer in use, such as first-, second-, or third-class cruiser, gun-vessel, torpedo gunboat, etc., have been omitted, and the ships are grouped in accordance with their nearest approach to the more precise differentiation of the period of the Great War. Thus all unarmoured vessels which are above 2,000 tons displacement have been classed as light cruisers, and all below that tonnage as sloops, unless the torpedo armament has been the most important part of their offensive equipment, in which case they have been included in the category of torpedo craft. Thus, for example, the so-called "torpedo gunboats" of the Russian Navy—which carried no armament worthy of mention—have been classed as destroyers, to which type of vessel they most nearly correspond in size, equipment, and war value. Similarly the small but very heavily armed Elswick vessels of the *Chaoyang* class, which were so different in design from all other ships of their date that they stood in a class by themselves, have been included here among the sloops, on account of their tonnage, their lack of protection, and their slow rate of fire, which, in spite of the great calibre of their two heavy guns, prevented them from being a match for the lighter quick-firing armaments of the enemy's cruisers.

No vessels have been included in the "armoured" categories except those which possessed not only a belt and a

certain degree at least of protection to their guns, but an armament of sufficient weight to qualify them to engage any ships of the enemy with at least a possibility of success. In the old lists the sole qualification for inclusion in the armoured groups was the possession of a belt, which produced many anomalies of a most misleading description in an assessment of war value. For example, the *Chiyoda* was classed as an armoured vessel by virtue of a 5-inch belt, although her offensive equipment was merely a few unprotected guns of the lightest calibre, whereas her consorts of the *Matsushima* type were classed as unarmoured, because, although they carried the heaviest guns then afloat in well-armoured barbettes, they had no belts. Similarly the *Vladimir* and *Dmitri* are included among the armoured vessels in the old lists of the Russian Navy, although their armaments were so light that they were never used in armoured divisions in war. All such vessels, therefore, have been classified as light cruisers, which is the type most nearly representing their true belligerent qualification.

The smaller Chinese armoured vessels in 1894 were sometimes classed in the old lists as battleships, sometimes as coast-defence ships, and sometimes as first-class cruisers. The term "armoured cruiser" had not at that time come into use at all, but as it more correctly describes their character relatively to the other units of a fleet than any other, it has been adopted here.

No wooden vessel has been included in the "modern" groupings which was more than fifteen years old at the time. In the lists of obsolete but still serviceable ships nothing has been included with a speed of less than ten knots. In regard to speed in general, the figures given are based on an estimate of a reduction for age, and represent not necessarily the trial speeds, but the reasonably attainable speeds at the time.

In the details of armaments all calibres have been given in inches for the sake of simplicity, to which the measurements of Russian and other guns in centimetres have been reduced, not to a precise decimal, but to the nearest corresponding calibres in the British service of recent years. This gives the most convenient standard of comparison for British readers, in which the very minor inaccuracy of one or two decimals of an inch is not of any consequence.

SEA-GOING FLEET OF JAPAN AT OUTBREAK  
OF WAR IN 1894

MODERN LIGHT CRUISERS (8).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
AKITSUSHIMA ..	4 6-inch, 6 4·7-inch	3,150	19
CHIYODA ..	10 4·7-inch	2,450	19
HASHIDATE ..	1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,270	17
ITSUKUSHIMA ..	1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,270	17
MATSUSHIMA ..	1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,270	17
NANIWA ..	2 10-inch, 6 6-inch	3,650	17
TAKACHITO ..	2 10-inch, 6 6-inch	3,650	17
YOSHINO ..	4 6-inch, 8 4·7-inch	4,150	23

MODERN SLOOPS (12).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
AKAGI ..	4 6-inch	615	12
ATAGO ..	1 8-inch, 1 4·7-inch	615	12
KATSURAKI ..	2 7-inch, 6 4·7-inch	1,470	12
MAYA ..	4 6-inch	615	12
MUSHASI ..	2 7-inch, 5 4·7-inch	1,470	12
OSHIMA ..	4 4·7-inch	640	14
TAKAO ..	4 6-inch	1,760	15
TSUKUSHI ..	2 10-inch, 4 4·7-inch	1,500	15
TATSUTA ..	2 4·7-inch	875	21
TSOKAI ..	1 8-inch, 1 4·7-inch	615	12
YAEYAMA ..	3 4·7-inch	1,600	20
YAMATO ..	2 7-inch, 5 4·7-inch	1,470	12

MODERN TORPEDO CRAFT (21).

<i>Number and Class.</i>	<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
1 torpedo-boat ..	4 machine-guns	190	19
		60	20
20 torpedo-boats	2 machine-guns	{ to	to
		90	23

OBSOLETE VESSELS FIT FOR MINOR WAR DUTIES (4).

<i>Number and Class.</i>	<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
3 battleships ..	{ 3 7-inch, 6 6-inch	2,200	10
	to	to	
	{ 4 10-inch, 2 7-inch	3,720	10
1 sloop ..	1 6-inch, 4 4·7-inch	900	

### SEA-GOING FLEET OF CHINA AT OUTBREAK OF WAR IN 1894.

#### MODERN BATTLESHIPS (2).

<i>Name.</i>		<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
CHENYUEN	..	4 12-inch, 2 6-inch	7,430	13
TINGYUEN	..	4 12-inch, 2 6-inch	7,430	13

#### MODERN ARMoured CRUISERS (3).

<i>Name.</i>		<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
KINGYUEN	..	2 8-inch, 2 6-inch	2,850	15
PINGYUEN	..	1 10-inch, 2 6-inch	2,850	10
LAIYUEN ..	..	2 8-inch, 2 6-inch	2,850	15

#### MODERN LIGHT CRUISERS (10).

<i>Name.</i>		<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
CHIYUEN ..	..	3 8-inch, 2 6-inch	2,300	16
CHINGYUEN	..	3 8-inch, 2 6-inch	2,300	16
FOOCHING	..	3 8-inch, 7 4·7-inch	2,500	15
FOOSING ..	..	2 8-inch, 8 4·7-inch	2,200	15
KAICHAI ..	..	2 8-inch, 6 6-inch	2,480	13
NANSHUEN	..	2 8-inch, 8 4·7-inch	2,200	13
NANTIN ..	..	2 8-inch, 8 4·7-inch	2,200	13
TSIYUEN ..	..	2 8-inch, 1 6-inch	2,350	13
YUNGPAO	..	3 8-inch, 7 4·7-inch	2,500	13
YESING ..	..	3 8-inch, 7 4·7-inch	2,500	13

#### MODERN SLOOPS (9).

<i>Name.</i>		<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
CHAOYANG	..	2 10-inch, 4 4·7-inch	1,350	14
FOOCHOW ..	..	2 6-inch	1,300	11
HUANTAI ..	..	2 6-inch, 5 4·7-inch	1,300	13
KONGBIN	..	1 6-inch, 1 4·7-inch	1,100	18
KONGHAI	..	1 6-inch, 1 4·7-inch	1,100	18
KWANCHI ..	..	2 4·7-inch	1,200	12
KWANKING	..	3 4·7-inch	1,000	16
KWANPING	..	2 4·7-inch	1,000	10
YUNGWEI ..	..	2 10-inch, 4 4·7-inch	1,350	14

#### MODERN TORPEDO CRAFT.

<i>Number and Class.</i>	<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
1 torpedo-boat ..	4 machine-guns	130	24
27 torpedo-boats	2 machine-guns	65	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 20 \\ \text{to} \\ 23 \end{array} \right.$

APPENDIX II

SEA-GOING FLEET OF JAPAN AT OUTBREAK  
OF WAR IN 1904

MODERN BATTLESHIPS (6).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
ASAHI ..	.. 4 12-inch, 14 6-inch	15,200	18
FUJI ..	.. 4 12-inch, 10 6-inch	12,320	19
HATSUSE ..	.. 4 12-inch, 14 6-inch	15,000	19
MIKASA ..	.. 4 12-inch, 14 6-inch	15,200	18
SHIKISHIMA ..	.. 4 12-inch, 14 6-inch	14,850	18
YASHIMA ..	.. 4 12-inch, 10 6-inch	12,320	19

MODERN ARMoured CRUISERS (8).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
ASAMA ..	.. 4 8-inch, 14 6-inch	9,750	22
AZUMA ..	.. 4 8-inch, 12 6-inch	9,430	20
IDZUMO ..	.. 4 8-inch, 14 6-inch	9,750	21
IWATE ..	.. 4 8-inch, 14 6-inch	9,750	22
KASUGA ..	.. 1 10-inch, 2 8-inch, 14 6-inch	7,700	20
NISHIN ..	.. 4 8-inch, 14 6-inch	7,700	20
TOKIWA ..	.. 4 8-inch, 14 6-inch	9,750	23
YAKUMO ..	.. 4 8-inch, 12 6-inch	9,850	20

MODERN LIGHT CRUISERS (16).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
AKASHI ..	.. 2 6-inch, 6 4·7-inch	2,657	20
AKITSUSHIMA ..	.. 4 6-inch, 6 4·7-inch	3,150	18
CHITOSE ..	.. 2 8-inch, 10 4·7-inch	4,760	22
CHIYODA ..	.. 10 4·7-inch	2,450	16
HASHIDATE ..	.. 1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,280	16
ITSUKUSHIMA ..	.. 1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,280	16
IDZUMI ..	.. 2 6-inch, 6 4·7-inch	2,800	17
KASAGI ..	.. 2 8-inch, 10 4·7-inch	5,400	22
MATSUSHIMA ..	.. 1 12·5-inch, 11 4·7-inch	4,280	17
NANIWA ..	.. 2 10-inch, 6 6-inch	3,650	15
NITAKA ..	.. 6 6-inch	3,420	20
SUMA ..	.. 2 6-inch, 6 4·7-inch	2,660	20
TAKACHITO ..	.. 2 10-inch, 6 6-inch	3,700	15
TAKASAGO ..	.. 2 8-inch, 10 4·7-inch	4,160	23
TSUSHIMA ..	.. 6 6-inch	3,420	20
YOSHINO ..	.. 4 6-inch, 8 4·7-inch	4,180	23



## MODERN SLOOPS (5).

<i>Name.</i>		<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
CHIHAYA ..	..	2 4·7-inch	1,250	21
MIYAKO ..	..	2 4·7-inch	1,800	20
TATSUTA ..	..	2 4·7-inch	880	21
TSUKUSHI ..	..	2 10-inch, 4 4·7-inch	1,350	13
YAYEYAMA ..	..	3 4·7-inch	1,600	20

## MODERN TORPEDO CRAFT (33).

<i>Number and Class.</i>		<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
6 destroyers ..	{	1 12-pounder, } 5 6-pounders }	285	30
11 destroyers ..	{	1 12-pounder, } 5 6-pounders }	310	31
9 first-class torpedo-boats	{	3 3-pounders	150	30
7 first-class torpedo-boats ..	{	3 3-pounders	120	28

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSOLETE VESSELS FIT FOR SUBSIDIARY DUTIES IN WAR (12).

<i>Number and Class.</i>		<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots</i>
1 battleship ..		4 12-inch, 4 6-inch	7,400	12
1 armoured cruiser		1 10-inch, 2 6-inch	2,000	10
1 light cruiser ..		2 8-inch, 1 6-inch	2,280	12
5 sloops ..	{	2 6-inch, 5 4·7-inch	1,470	12
		to	to	to
		4 6-inch	1,770	13
4 sloops ..	{	1 6-inch, 1 4·7-inch	615	10
		to	to	to
	{	1 8-inch, 1 6-inch	770	13

SEA-GOING FLEET OF RUSSIA AT OUTBREAK OF  
WAR IN 1904 (INCLUSIVE OF VESSELS NEARING  
COMPLETION, BUT EXCLUSIVE OF BLACK SEA  
FLEET)

MODERN BATTLESHIPS (16).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
ALEXANDER II. ..	2 12-inch, 4 9-inch, 8 6-inch	9,930	13
ALEXANDER III.	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	13,500	18
BOBODINO ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	13,600	18
KNIAZ SOUVAROFF	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	13,500	18
NAVARIN ..	4 12-inch, 8 6-inch	10,200	15
NICHOLAS I. ..	2 12-inch, 4 9-inch, 8 6-inch	9,670	13
OREL ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	13,600	18
OSLYABYA ..	4 10-inch, 11 6-inch	12,670	18
PERESVYET ..	4 10-inch, 11 6-inch	12,670	18
PETROPAVLOSK ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	11,350	16
POLTAVA ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	10,960	16
POBIEDA ..	4 10-inch, 11 6-inch	12,670	18
RETVISAN ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	12,700	18
SEVASTOPOL ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	10,960	16
SISSOI VELIKI ..	4 12-inch, 6 6-inch	10,400	15
TSAREVITCH ..	4 12-inch, 12 6-inch	12,900	19

MODERN ARMoured CRUISERS (4).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
BAYAN ..	2 8-inch, 8 6-inch	7,720	22
GEOMOBOI ..	4 8-inch, 16 6-inch, 6 4.7-inch	12,330	20
ROSSIA ..	4 8-inch, 16 6-inch	12,130	20
RURIK ..	4 8-inch, 16 6-inch, 6 4.7-inch	10,920	19

MODERN ARMoured COAST-DEFENCE SHIPS (3).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
ADMIRAL APRAXIN	3 10-inch, 4 6-inch	4,200	15
ADMIRAL SENYAVIN	4 9-inch, 4 6-inch	4,100	16
ADMIRAL USHAKOFF	4 9-inch, 4 6-inch	4,100	16

## MODERN LIGHT CRUISERS (13).

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
ALMAZ .. ..	6 4·7-inch	3,280	19
ASKOLD .. ..	12 6-inch	5,900	23
AURORA .. ..	8 6-inch	6,630	20
BOGATYR .. ..	12 6-inch	6,640	24
BOYARIN .. ..	6 4·7-inch	3,200	25
DIANA .. ..	12 6-inch	6,630	20
IZUMBUD .. ..	6 4·7-inch	3,080	24
JEMCHOUG .. ..	6 4·7-inch	3,080	24
NOVIK .. ..	6 4·7-inch	3,080	24
OLEG .. ..	12 6-inch	6,670	22
PALLADA .. ..	8 6-inch	6,630	20
SVETLANA .. ..	6 6-inch	3,800	20
VARYAG .. ..	12 6-inch	6,500	23

## MODERN TORPEDO CRAFT (61).

<i>Number and Class.</i>	<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
6 destroyers ..	7 3-pounders	400	20
	to	to	to
44 destroyers ..	11 3-pounders	735	22
	1 12-pounder, 3 3-pounders, to 1 12-pounder,	240	27
	5 3-pounders	370	29
1 destroyer ..	6 3-pounders	280	35
10 torpedo-boats	2 to 4 machine-guns	80	19
		140	22

## OBSOLETE VESSELS FIT FOR SUBSIDIARY WAR DUTIES (14).

<i>Number and Class.</i>	<i>Gun Armament.</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Knots.</i>
2 armoured cruisers	8 8-inch, 10 6-inch,	8,500	14
	to	to	to
3 light cruisers ..	2 8-inch, 13 6-inch	6,670	16
	2 8-inch, 14 3-inch,	5,800	13
	to	to	to
	6 6-inch	6,000	15
9 sloops .. ..	1 9-inch, 1 6-inch,	950	10
	to	to	to
	2 8-inch, 1 6-inch	1,500	13

## INDEX

**A**

ADAMS, "History of Japan," extracts from, 102, 108, 115, 11 , 117  
 Agulhas Bank, 264  
*Atagi*, the, 299  
*Atashi*, the, 301  
*Akitsuushima*, the, 299, 301  
 Alcock, Sir Rutherford, British Minister to Japan, 108; recalled, 110  
*Alexander II*, the, 303  
*Alexander III*, the, 276, 303; sunk, 277  
 Alexsief, Admiral, 220; in command of the fleet, 202; in Manchuria, 227  
*Almaz*, the, 304  
*Amsterdam*, the, 111  
 Amur River, 187  
 Angar Pequena, 264  
 Anglo-Japanese treaty, 181-184  
 Angola, 264  
*Apraria*, the, 279, 303  
 Archipelago Islands, 13  
*Argus*, the, 95, 111  
*Asahi*, the, 301  
*Asama*, the, 301  
 Asan, port of, 180, 140  
*Askold*, the, 304  
*Atago*, the, 299  
*Aurora*, the, 304  
 Australia, population, 294  
 Awomori Bay, 121  
*Azuma*, the, 301

**B**

Baltic, the, 186, 194; fleet, 261, 270; fire on British trawlers, 262; coaling at sea, 263; voyage to Tsushima Island, 263-273; Battle of Tsushima, 272-284; fate of, 282; casualties, 283  
*Barrosa*, the, 111  
*Bagan*, the, 303; strikes a mine, 234, 236; sunk, 266  
 Bezobrasoff, Rear-Admiral, at Vladivostok, 245; raids, 245

Black Sea, 194  
*Bogatyr*, the, 304  
*Boradino*, the, 276, 303; blown up, 277  
*Bouncer*, the, 111  
 Boxer Rebellion, 180, 188  
*Boyarin*, the, 304  
 British Naval Discipline Act, 11  
 British North American Colonies, secession, 80  
 British trawlers fired on by the Baltic fleet, 262  
 Buddhism, 75  
 Bungo Channel, 88, 91

**C**

Canton, 20  
*Chaoyang*, the, 297, 300  
 Chefoo, 170  
 Chemulpo, 206, 209  
*Chenyuen*, the, 134, 195, 300; damaged, 161, 169, 172  
*Chihaya*, the, 302  
 Chi-li, 133  
 China, 154; war with Japan, 9, 131, 143; invaded by the Mongols, 20; under the Ming dynasty, 43; treaty of peace with Japan, 58, 173; diplomatic missions to Japan, 60; assistance to Korea, 61; strategical importance of Korea, 126; relations with, 127; policy, 132; provinces, 133; cessation of territories, 173, 174; indemnity, 174; the Boxer Rebellion, 180, 188  
 China Sea, 263  
 Chinchow, 225, 226  
 Chinese army force the Japanese to retreat, 57, 62; camp at Wei-hai-wei, 130; fleet, 133-137, 160, 169, 171; outbreak of hostilities, 141; Battle of the Yalu, 146-151; annihilation, 172  
*Chingyuen*, the, 300  
*Chitose*, the, 301  
*Chiyoda*, the, 146, 298, 299, 301  
*Chiyuen*, the, 300  
 Chosiu, Prince of, attack on foreign

shipping, 86-93; demand for his punishment, 105; banished from Court, 107; insubordination, 107; opposition policy, 109; surrender, 113; amount of his fine, 114  
 Chosiu, the, 85; policy, 85  
*Conqueror*, the, 111  
*Coquette*, the, 95, 111  
 Crimean War, 216

## D

Dakar, port of, 264  
 Dardanelles, the, 186, 194  
*Diana*, the, 304  
*D'Jambi*, the, 111, 113  
*Dmitri*, the, 298  
*Dreadnought*, the, 51, 53  
 Duguay-Trouin, 128  
*Dupleix*, the, 111, 112, 113, 114  
 Dutch merchants in Japan, 74, 78;  
 bombard the converts, 77

## E

Elliot Islands, 220  
 English merchants, attacked by Japanese, 86, 93  
 Enomoto, Admiral, sails for Yezo, 121; attacked by Imperial troops, 121-123; surrender, 122  
 Enquist, Admiral, 282  
 Essen, Captain, 256-259  
*Euryalus*, the, 95, 97, 111, 112, 113

## F

Felkersham, Rear-Admiral, 263;  
 death, 275  
 Fillmore, President, 81  
 Fisher, Lord, 70  
*Fooching*, the, 300  
*Foochow*, the, 300  
 Foochow Dockyard, 134  
*Foosing*, the, 300  
 Formosa, 70, 267 ceded to Japan, 174;  
 France, the fleet, 1; colonization of lands, 79; treaty with Japan, 84; demands demolition of Shimonoeki batteries, 105-110; force, 110; attack, 111-114; interference with Japan, 176, 179  
*Fuji*, the, 301  
 Fukuoka Bay, 26  
 Fusan, Japanese troops land at, 49

## G

Gaboon River, 264  
 Geneva Convention, 208  
 Germany, result of the war on the army and navy, 1; policy to Japan, 176-179, 288  
 Good Hope, Cape of, 81

Goto Islands, 269, 272  
 Great Britain, naval Power, 1; colonization of lands, 79; treaties with Japan, 83, 84, 181-184, 288; demand payment of indemnity, 93, 104; trade with Japan, 102; duty to national rights, 103; demand demolition of Shimonoeki batteries, 105-110; force, 110; attack, 111-114; policy to Japan, 180; administration of Egypt, 290  
 Great Fish Bay, 264  
*Gromoboi*, the, 249, 303; strikes a mine, 268

## H

Hai-yun-tan, Island of, 146  
 Hakodate, port opened to traders, 83; capture of, 121  
 Hakozaki Bay, 25, 35  
*Hashidate*, the, 299, 301  
*Hatusee*, the, 301; sunk, 223  
*Havoc*, the, 95  
 Hideyoshi, military talents, 44; wish to conquer China, 45, 49; preparations for war, 46-49; army, 47, 49; sends envoys to Korea, 47; policy against, 53-64; death, 64, 73  
 Himeshima, Island of, 111  
 Hiroshima Bay, 160  
 Holland, colonization of lands, 79; treaty with Japan, 84; demands demolition of Shimonoeki batteries, 105-110; force, 110; attack, 111-114  
 Hong-Kong, 81; devastated by a typhoon, 38, 39  
 Howorth, extract from, 22  
*Huantai*, the, 300  
 Huyuan-kon, 157, 158

## I

*Idsumi*, the, 301; sights the Baltic fleet, 272  
 Iessen, Rear-Admiral, raids, 247; at Vladivostok, 248; Battle of Ulsan, 248  
 Iki, Island of, attack on, 25, 32  
 Imari, Gulf of, 35, 39  
 Indian Ocean, 263, 265  
 Inouye, 109  
 Ito, 109  
 Ito, Admiral Count, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Fleet, 138; off Taikong River, 145; Battle of the Yalu, 148-151  
*Itukushima*, the, 299, 301  
 Ivan III, Tsar of Russia, 181

*Iwate*, the, 301

Iyegasu, Shogun, administration, 74; retirement, 75

Iyemitsu, Shogun, 75; policy against the Christians, 76; expulsion of foreigners, 76

*Izumrud*, the, 304

J

Japan, third naval Power, 1; financial position, 2; rapid rise from a position of obscurity, 2; insular position, 4, 19, 291; civil wars, 5, 42; war with Korea, 6; period of seclusion, 7-9, 11, 78-80; creation of a navy, 9; war with China, 9, 46-49, 60, 131-143; war with Russia, 10; influence of the sea, 11; invasion of Korea, 15; invaded by "Tois," 16-19; rejection of diplomatic advances from Kublai Khan, 22, 28, 30; defeats the Mongolians, 32, 35-45; preparations for war, 28-30, 34; introduction of Christianity, 42, 74; trade with Portugal, 42, 74; the Emperor, or Mikado, 43; the Shogun, 43; relations with Korea, 46, 48; disasters at sea, 50; destruction of the fleet, 52-57, 63, 65-67; retreat, 57; terms of peace, 58, 284; diplomatic missions, 60; lessons of the war, 67-72; cost, 70; expulsion of foreigners, 76, 106; mission from the United States, 81-83; treaty ports opened, 83; treaties with the Powers, 84; attack on foreign shipping, 86-93; result of dual administration, 94, 107, 116; Battle of Kagosima, 95-101; payment of indemnities, 104, 114; Battle of Shimonoseki, 111-114; office of Shogun abolished, 120; operations against Admiral Enomoto, 121-124; Imperial Navy, 124, 195-198; strategic and political importance of keeping Korea free, 125-129; proposals of reform, 129; policy against China, 133, 155; preparation of sea forces, 133, 143; outbreak of hostilities, 141; Battle of the Yalu, 146-151; policy to capture Port Arthur harbour, 155-160; attack on Wei-hai-wei harbour, 161-170; treaty of peace with China, 173; territories ceded to, 173, 174; interference of Russia, France, and Germany, 176-178; policy in

the European War, 178, 179; treaty with Great Britain, 181-184, 288, 291; first phase of the war with Russia, 185-215; result of the Russian occupation of Manchuria, 189; negotiations, 190; disadvantages of hostilities, 191; bases for war-supplies, 192; despatch of troops to Korea, 207, 209; second phase of the war, 216-250; plan of invasion of Manchuria, 217; final phase, 251-287; annexation of Korea, 289; policy, 292; member of the League of Nations, 293; relations with the United States, 293; predominance in Eastern Asia, 294-296; naval policy, 296

Japanese, the, aptitude for war, 3, 10, 286; martial spirit, 4; converts to Roman Catholicism, 75; extermination, 76-78; characteristics, 293, 296

Japanese army land at Fusan, 49; advance on Seoul, 50; defeated, 62; at Chemulpo, 130; victory at Pengyang, 145, 151, 154; captures Port Arthur, 156-160; at Yung-ching Bay, 165; attack on Wei-hai-wei, 165-170; disembark at Liao-tung, 219-221, 227; Battle of Telissu, 227; victories in Manchuria, 253, 261

Japanese Fleet, 9, 124, 137-140, 146, 178, 193, 195-198, 224, 238, 207, 299, 301; destruction, 52-57, 63, 65-67; attempts to block Port Arthur, 208-211, 214; mining operations, 212; siege of Port Arthur, 219-223, 225-227, 233-238, 253-259; Battle of the Yellow Sea, 238-247; Battle of Ulsan, 245, 249; work of repairing, 254, 260, 268; capture of "203-Metre Hill," 255; attack on the *Sevastopol*, 256-259; casualties, 260, 283; dispositions, 268; battle off Tsushima, 272-284

Jaures, Rear-Admiral, reprisals, 9

*Jemchoug*, the, 304

Jenghiz Empire, fall of, 43

Jenghiz Khan, 19, 186

Jengo, Empress, invasion of Korea, 15

Jesuit missionaries in Japan, 74

Joaling, Captain, killed, 100

K

Kagosima, Battle of, 41, 95-102; Bay, 95; Gulf of, 96

- Kaichai*, the, 300  
*Kamimura*, Rear-Admiral, 208, 238, 245-247; at the Battle of Ulsan, 248  
*Kamranh Bay*, 265  
*Kamschatka*, 185  
*Kasagi*, the, 301  
*Kasuga*, the, 301  
*Katsuraki*, the, 299  
*Kiao-chao*, port of, 243, 244  
*Kienchang*, attack on, 88  
*Kingyuen*, the, 300  
*Kioto*, 117, 120  
*Kinshiu Island*, 13; raid of Tois, 17-19; invaded by Mongols, 26, 34; riots, 75  
*Kniaz Souvaroff*, the, 303  
*Kobe*, 117  
*Kondratenko*, General, killed, 259  
*Kongbin*, the, 300  
*Konghai*, the, 300  
*Koniishi*, General, advance on Korea, 50; at Peng-yang, 57; policy of withdrawal, 58, 65; in command of the new Japanese fleet, 60; naval victory, 61; defeated, 62, 65-67  
*Korea*, 13; war with Japan, 6; invasion of, 15; under the rule of the Mongolian Empire, 21-23; independence, 43, 173; relations with Japan, 46, 48; armed posts in, 59, 63; troops from China, 61, 130; inefficiency of the fleet, 61; defeated, 61; lessons of the war, 67-72; strategical and political importance to Japan, 125; to China, 126; relations with China, 127; misgovernment, 128; insurrection, 129; proposals of reform, 129; troops from Japan, 130, 207, 209; annexed to, 289; condition, 290  
*Kowshing*, the, 141; sunk, 142  
*Kruis*, the, 111, 113  
*Kublai Khan*, attempts to invade Japan, 4; founds the city of Peking, 20; campaigns in China, 20-22; diplomatic advances to Japan, 22, 30; preparations for war, 23-25, 27-31, 40; failure of his expeditions, 25-27, 35-37; size of his army, 29; concentration of the fleet, 31-33; attack on Kinshiu, 34; destruction of his fleet by a typhoon, 37-40; death, 40  
*Kuper*, Rear-Admiral, in command of a British squadron, 95, 110; at Kagosima Bay, 95; present demands, 96; seizes steamers, 98; Battle of Kagosima, 99-101; sails for Yokohama, 101  
*Kuropatkin*, General, in command in Manchuria, 222, 227  
*Kwanchi*, the, 300  
*Kwang-su*, Emperor of China, 133  
*Kwanking*, the, 300  
*Kwanping*, the, 300
- L
- La Pérouse*, Straits of, 267, 269  
*Laiyuen*, the, 300  
*League of Nations*, 293  
*Leopard*, the, 111  
*Leu-kung-tau*, Island of, 163, 164  
*Liao-tung Peninsula*, 156, 157, 158, 217, 219; ceded to Japan, 173  
*Liao-yang*, Battle of, 153  
*Libau*, 254  
*Li-Hung-Chang*, Viceroy, 133, 136; diplomatic mission to Japan, 173  
*Ly-ee-moon Pass*, 39
- M
- Madagascar*, 264  
*Makarov*, Admiral, 262; in command of the Russian fleet, 210, 212; characteristics, 210; killed, 213  
*Malacca*, Straits of, 263, 268  
*Malay Archipelago*, 261  
*Manchuria*, 157; invasion of, 158, 217, 227, 253; railway to Port Arthur, 187; occupied by Russian troops, 188-190; evacuated, 265  
*Masampo*, 269, 273  
*Matsushima*, the, 139, 149, 296, 299, 301  
*Matsushima Island*, 280  
*Maya*, the, 299  
*Medusa*, the, 111; attack on, 88  
*Merrimac*, the, 52  
*Metlen*, the, 111, 113  
*"Metre Hill, 203,"* capture of, 255  
*Mikado* or Emperor of Japan, 43; opposition to foreigners, 83, 85, 94; treatment of Prince Choshu, 106; refuses to deal with foreign Ministers, 117, 118; death, 119  
*Mikasa*, the, 199, 301  
*Minefields*, 268, 287  
*Mississippi*, the, 61  
*Miyako*, the, 302  
*Mongolia*, 20  
*Mongolians*, the, invasion of China, 20; military power, 21; fleet destroyed by a typhoon, 38-40; revert to desert tribesmen, 43

Mukden, 158; Battle of, 261, 265  
 Murdooh, 30, 35  
*Mutahasi*, the, 299  
 Mutsuhito, Emperor of Japan, 119;  
 enlightened views, 124

## N

Nagasaki harbour, 78, 86; port  
 opened to traders, 83  
*Nakhimoff*, the, torpedoed, 279  
*Nanica*, the, 299, 301  
 Nankin, 20  
 Nan-shan, Battle of, 225  
*Nanahuen*, the, 300  
*Nantin*, the, 300  
 Naval designs, progress, 79  
*Navarin*, the, 303; sunk, 279  
 Navy, Japanese, 24, 193, 195-198;  
 founded, 124; character of the,  
 153  
 Neale, Colonel, attempt on his life,  
 84  
 Nebogatoff, Rear-Admiral, 266; in  
 command of the Baltic fleet, 275;  
 surrenders, 281  
 Neva, the, 186  
*Nicholas II.*, the, 266, 278, 303  
*Niitaka*, the, 301  
 Nipon or Honshu Island, 13, 86, 121,  
 267  
*Nishin*, the, 301  
 Nogi, General, attack on Port  
 Arthur, 233; Battle of the Yellow  
 Sea, 238-245  
 North Sea, 178  
 Noryang, Island of, 52, 53  
*Novik*, the, 244, 304

## O

Okhotak, Sea of, 187  
 Okpo, Island of, 52  
*Oleg*, the, 304  
*Orel*, the, 277, 279, 284, 303  
*Oshima*, the, 299  
*Oshyabya*, the, 274, 303; sunk, 275,  
 278, 284  
 Oyama, Marshal, 159

## P

Pacific Ocean, 80, 185, 291, 296;  
 trade, 2  
*Pallada*, the, 304; sunk, 256  
 Palmerston, Lord, 80  
*Pearl*, the, 95  
 Pe-chi-li, Gulf of, 127, 156, 158, 161,  
 162  
 Peiho River, 127, 173  
 Peking, 20, 127; siege of the foreign  
 legations, 180  
*Pembroke*, the, attack on, 87

Peng-yang, 50, 57, 131; capture of,  
 145, 151, 154  
*Peresvyet*, the, 241, 303; sunk,  
 256  
 Perry, Commodore, mission to  
 Japan, 81-83; at Yokohama Bay,  
 81  
*Perseus*, the, 95, 111  
 Pescadores Islands ceded to Japan,  
 174  
 Peter the Great, 186  
*Petropavlosk*, the, 303; blown up,  
 213, 215  
*Phaeton*, the, 78  
 Philippine Islands, 267  
*Pingyuen*, the, 300  
*Plymouth*, the, 81  
*Pobieda*, the, 303; strikes a mine,  
 213; sunk, 256  
 Polo, Marco, 29  
*Poltava*, the, 303; sunk, 256  
 Port Arthur, 136, 143, 155; position,  
 156; advance of the Japanese,  
 156-160; leased to Russia, 181,  
 187; railway to Manchuria, 187;  
 attempts to block, 208-211, 214;  
 siege of, 219-223, 225-227, 233-  
 238, 251-259; surrenders, 259  
 Portugal, trade with Japan, 42, 74;  
 colonization of lands, 79

## Q

Quelpart, Island of, 269

## R

*Racehorse*, the, 95  
 Ramming "tactics," 152  
*Retvizan*, the, 205, 211, 303; sunk,  
 256  
 Rietzenstein, 236  
 Roman Catholic missionaries in  
 Japan, 42, 74  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 284, 292  
 Roahdestvensky, Admiral, in com-  
 mand of the Baltic fleet, 262;  
 voyage to Tsushima Island, 263-  
 273; characteristics, 263, 265;  
 exhortation to his men, 266;  
 Battle of Tsushima, 273-275;  
 wounded, 275, 277; taken  
 prisoner, 282  
*Rosaria*, the, 303  
*Rurik*, the, 303; damaged, 248  
 Russia, the Fleet, 1; war with Japan,  
 10, 204; policy to, 176, 179; Port  
 Arthur leased to, 181, 187; founda-  
 tion of the Empire, 185; first phase  
 of the war with Japan, 185-216;  
 extent of territory, 186; policy  
 to reach an ice-free port, 186;



in Manchuria, 188; advantages of a war, 191; bases for war-supplies, 192; maritime position, 194; second phase, 216-250; mine-fields, 223, 233; final phase, 251-287; terms of peace, 284; evacuation of Manchuria, 285  
 Russian army defeated at the Battle of Telissu, 227  
 Russian fleet, 1, 188, 200-202, 211, 222, 236, 270, 303, 304; distribution 202-204; reinforcements, 212, 218; chased by the Japanese, 231; in the siege of Port Arthur, 232-238; Battle of the Yellow Sea, 238-245; fate of, 243-245, 282; Battle of Ulsan, 245-249; leave Libau, 254; Battle of Tsushima, 272-284; casualties, 283; "torpedo gunboats," 297

S

Saghalien, 16  
 Saigon, port of, 244  
 St. Petersburg, 221  
 Sakarajima, 100  
*Samurai*, the, skill in war, 4, 17  
*Saratoga*, the, 81  
 Satsuma, the, 85; policy, 85  
 Sebastopol, 70  
*Semirania*, the, 91, 111  
*Sengavin*, the, 279, 303  
 Seoul, 50, 57  
*Sevastopol*, the, 256, 303; strikes a mine, 231; attack on, 256-258; sunk, 259  
 Sha-ho, Battle of, 253  
 Shanghai, 244  
 Shantung, 144, 163  
*Shikishima*, the, 223, 301  
 Shimonoseki, Straits of, 86, 87, 246; closed for traffic, 105, 109; demand for the opening, 105-109; attack on, 111-114; reopened, 115; Treaty of, 173, 179  
*Shinano Maru*, the, sights the Baltic fleet, 272, 281  
 Shipbuilding, progress of, 6  
 Ships, methods of attack, 51; use of the ram, 152  
 Shogun, or dictator, 5; Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces, 43; power, 43; crest, 44; office abolished, 120  
 Shogun, a, demand of the foreign Ministers, 105-108; temporizing policy, 107; letter from the foreign Ministers, 116; appeal to the Mikado, 117; resignation, 120;

rebellion, 120; flight, 120; sails for Yezo, 121  
*Sissai Veliki*, the, 303; torpedoed, 279  
*Souvaroff*, the, 274, 275, 303; sunk, 277, 284  
 Spain, colonization of lands, 79  
 Spanish ship blown up, 78  
 Stark, Vice-Admiral, 202  
 Stoessel, General, 256, 258  
 Submarines, danger from, 70, 287  
 Suez Canal, 264  
*Suma*, the, 301  
 Sung dynasty, 20  
*Susquehanna*, the, 81, 82  
*Sveilana*, the, 304

## T

Taidong River, 50, 145, 209  
*Takachio*, the, 299, 301  
*Takao*, the, 299  
*Takasago*, the, 301  
*Takiang*, the, 111  
 Taku, 142  
 Takushan, 226  
 Talien-wan Bay, 202, 220, 225; capture of, 153, 226  
*Tancrède*, the, 91, 111  
 Tangier, 263  
*Tartar*, the, 111, 112, 113, 114  
*Tatsuta*, the, 299, 302  
 Telissu, Battle of, 227  
 Tengchow, 165  
 Tientsin, Treaty of, 128  
 Ting, Admiral, in command of the Chinese fleet, 136, 160, 169; tactics, 144; off the Yalu, 144, 146; orders, 146; formation of his fleet, 147; Battle of the Yalu, 148-151; escape to Wei-hai-wei, 158, 167; error of policy, 167; disables the guns, 168, 172; surrenders, 170; commits suicide, 170; chief advisers, 171  
*Ting-yuen*, the, 134, 300  
 Togo, Admiral, 142; in command of the Japanese fleet, 198; character, 199; attacks on the Russian fleet, 204, 210; chases it, 231; disposition of his fleet, 268; Battle of Tsushima, 272-284; tactics, 273, 283  
 Tois, or Manchurian pirates, invasion of Japan, 16; vessels, 16; raids on Tsushima, 17; on Kiu-shiu, 17-19; defeated, 17  
 Tokio, 82, 124  
*Tokiwa*, the, 301  
 Torpedoes, use of, 286  
*Tsarevitch*, the, 205, 211, 236,

- 240, 303; interned at Kiao-chao, 243  
*Tsuyuen*, the, 300  
*Tsokai*, the, 299  
*Tsuboi*, Rear-Admiral, 140  
*Tsugaru*, Straits of, 267, 269  
*Tsukushi*, the, 299, 302  
*Tsunahima*, Island of, 246; attack on, 17, 25; Straits of, 13, 14, 41, 49, 238, 245, 267, 269; defence of, 4; Battle of, 272-284  
*Tsushima*, the, 301  
Typhoon, 31, 37, 98-101
- U
- Ukhtomski, Rear-Admiral, 236; Battle of the Yellow Sea, 241; policy, 252  
*Ulsan*, Battle of, 245-249  
United States, naval Power, 1; squadron in Yokohama Bay, 8; relations with Japan, 80, 293; mission to, 81; treaty with, 83, 84; Civil War, 89; demands demolition of Shimonoseki batteries, 105-110; force, 110; attack, 111-114; peace conference, 284; administration of Cuba, 290  
*Ushakoff*, the, 279, 303; sunk, 281
- V
- Van Fong Bay, 266  
*Varyag*, the, 304  
*Victoria*, Queen, 73  
*Victoria*, the, sunk, 225  
*Viren*, Captain, in command of the Russian fleet, 252  
*Vitgeft*, Admiral, in command of the Russian fleet, 215, 220; orders, 222, 230, 235; declines action, 230; councils of war, 232, 235; ordered to leave Port Arthur, 235; Battle to the Yellow Sea, 238-240; killed, 240  
*Vladimir*, the, 298  
*Vladivostok*, 246; harbour of, 187, 202
- W
- Wars between States, three categories, 216  
*Wei-hai-wei*, 130, 158, 161; harbour, 162; attack on, 165-170  
Whaling trade, 80  
Whitehead torpedo, invention, 286  
*Wilhelm II.*, Emperor of Germany, character of his policy, 177  
*Wilmot*, Commander, killed, 100  
*Wyoming*, the, action against Japanese vessels, 89-91
- X
- Xavier*, the Jesuit missionary, 3
- Y
- Yakumo*, the, 301  
*Yalu River*, 144; Battle of, 146-151  
*Yamato*, the, 299  
*Yang-tse-kiang*, 23  
*Yashima*, the, 301; sunk, 223  
*Yayeyama*, the, 299, 302  
*Yellow Sea*, 127, 143, 155, 187, 194, 237; Battle of, 238  
*Yermak*, the Cossack leader, 185  
*Yezing*, the, 300  
*Yezo Island*, 13, 121, 267  
*Yi-sun*, Admiral, achievements, 50; inventive faculties, 51; ship, 51, 57, 70; destruction of the Japanese fleet, 52-57, 63, 65-67; strategic move, 55; superseded, 59; in command of the fleet, 62, 65; killed, 66; record, 67  
*Yokohama Bay*, 8, 81; treaty port, 84; proposal to close, 107  
*Yoshino*, the, 299, 301; sunk, 224  
*Yung Ching Bay*, 163, 165  
*Yungpao*, the, 300  
*Yungwei*, the, 300



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